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WARHAMMER 40,000

BATTLES

WARHAMMER 40,000

SUPPLEMENT

GAMES WORKSHOP

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FANGS OF THE WOLF

By Andy Chambers & Jervis Johnson

INTRODUCTION

This hard-fought encounter took place between a Space Wolf army commanded by Andy Chambers in the guise of Ragnar Blackmane, and the Ork Horde of Ghazghkull Thraka, ably impersonated on this occasion by Jervis Johnson. The battle was one of many fought during the course of the development of the Warhammer 40,000 game and the creation of the Space Wolves range of models.

The game was played on one of the 8' x 4' tables at the Games Workshop Studio and took about five hours once both sides had deployed. As is usual when playing a game for publication, copious notes were taken during play and polaroid photographs were shot every turn. This enabled the participants to recreate the battle later and to arrange the staged photographs that you see here. It is pretty much impossible to play a game and take decent photographs at the same time, so we always adopt this technique which allows us to have a proper battle and illustrate the result with good quality photographs of the vital moves.

The first thing we needed to do was set up the terrain for the battle. We particularly wanted to use the new ruins and rocky columns as these had just been completed by Adrian Wild, our resident model maker. A similar effect could be obtained with the card ruins from the Warhammer 40,000 game itself. For this battle we set the scenery up between us, as we had already decided we wanted an intense shoot-out around the ruins themselves. This would also curtail the effectiveness of the longer ranged weaponry, as the dense terrain would reduce the available lines of sight.

Because both the Space Wolves and Orks are very close-combat oriented this arrangement promised a good scrap over the central area of the battlefield. Generally speaking, this is a good way to set up your scenery no matter what armies are fighting. If you use lots of scenery and make sure there is plenty of cover in the centre of the table it will force both players to manoeuvre for position. Each piece of terrain becomes important as a position from which you can shoot. This is infinitely preferable to a game with little scenery where players cling to their base lines shooting at the enemy with heavy weapons.

THE SCENARIO

For this particular battle we invented a specific scenario to make the game more interesting. A Dark Angels Space Marine Predator has been lost in no-mans land between Ork and Imperial forces on the world of Golgotha. The Predator carries vital plans and troop dispositions which must be recovered or destroyed before the Orks can capture them. Unfortunately the Predator's crew has been killed by a rogue swarm of killer Buzz squigs, and now a mob of looting Gretchin has discovered the vehicle and news of its importance has reached the Ork Warlord Ghazghkull Thraka.

Realising that it would be disastrous for such information to fall into the hands of the notorious Ghazghkull, Wolf Lord Ragnar Blackmane and a force of Space Wolves advances rapidly towards the area. The Space Wolves are attempting to recover the plans, or at the very least to prevent them falling into the hands of the Orks. The fact that the plans have been lost by the Space Wolves' greatest rivals, the Dark Angels Chapter, is added incentive for Ragnar Blackmane to save the day and prove the worth of the Space Wolves once more! Even as the Space Wolves advance, an Ork force led by Ghazghkull approaches from the opposite direction.

We decided that to win the game one side or other would have to recover the plans and get them out of danger. To do this a model must be moved inside the Predator to get the plans, and then the model must be retreated away from the battle, exiting by the player's own table edge. Alternatively, if a vehicle crew could be moved inside the Predator it could be driven off the player's table edge for victory. We decided that any models climbing into the Predator would forfeit their shooting phase whilst they recovered plans or readied the vehicle. The Predator is drivable and its weaponry operational. Due to its alien construction, the Orks are only permitted to drive or operate the Predator if there is an Ork Mekboy on board. In the case of the Space Marines any model could act as a crewman.

All of these conditions were mutually agreed before the game began. It is a simple matter to invent a scenario like this, and it makes the game far more interesting. The Warhammer 40,000 game has special Mission cards which can also be used to establish the broad objectives of each side, but even so, it is well worth inventing your own scenarios now and again.

WAA GHAZGHKULL!

(Jervis Johnson)

For this battle I took command of a Goff warband from our Studio Ork army. It forms the core of our Ork army and is therefore a force I'm quite familiar with. Most importantly, the Orks are led by Ghazghkull Thraka, a special Ork character with better than usual characteristics and some potent weaponry. His abilities would undoubtedly prove useful during the game. He is also the only character available who would be able to fight Ragnar Blackmane or Ulrik the Slayer on anything like equal terms.

Ghazghkull's faithful warband includes a Mekaniak (Gorbog) and a Runtherd (Grotslag). The force also includes a strange Ork weapon, the Shokk Attack Gun, which I was looking forward to using for the first time. The Shokk Attack Gun is not described in the main Warhammer 40,000 game (it's featured in the Ork Codex) so we were anxious to see just how effective it would prove. The Shokk Attack Gun is a kind of teleporter that projects an attack mob of enraged Snotlings amongst the enemy.

When using the Ork army in the past I'd found that it is best to organise the Orks into fairly large mobs rather than several smaller ones. This is primarily because larger mobs are harder to break. I decided to use a twenty-strong mob of Goffs as the main force in my army. At this stage in the development of Warhammer 40,000 we were in the course of designing the army lists, and I was still allowed a fairly flexible combination of weapons including two different heavy weapons in the mob. I therefore included both a heavy plasma gun and heavy bolter. Since playing this game the army lists have been revised so that the different Ork mobs are now significantly different in the way they are armed, and astute players will realise that my mob does not therefore conform to the Codex Army Lists!

I decided to break with my usual practice and include a number of Ork vehicles in the form of a warbuggy, two war bikes and a wartrak. I also added in the Ork Dreadnought to form a powerful armoured core to the army.

DA PLAN

Unlike many of the Warhammer 40,000 games I had played in the past, where the objective was simply to wipe out the enemy, this game had a very specific set of victory conditions. Somehow or other I had to get the plans that were in the wrecked Predator off my edge of the table in order to win the game. An added problem for my Orks was that only Mekaniaks could drive the Predator, unlike the superbly trained Space Marines, who were allowed to use any of their models to perform the same action.

Bearing this in mind, I decided to set up the vast bulk of my force as close to the Predator as I could get them. My largest single unit was the Goffs, so I set these up first right opposite the Predator and the full 12" in from my table edge that I was allowed. I hoped that the Goffs would be able to overwhelm any Space Marines near the Predator, but I also wanted to use them to draw fire away from my other mobs. The Goffs, being a big unit, were perfectly capable of sustaining a large number of casualties without breaking. As they also had a lower proportion of heavy weapons than my other mobz, they would also act as a good 'skirmish' screen to lead the attack.

The next unit I set up was the Evil Sunz. These went to the left of the Goffs, partially to support their flank, but mainly because the mob included a Mekaniak who could drive the Predator. As the Evil Sunz had relatively few heavy weapons I wouldn't mind keeping them moving to support the Goffs, and if I could get the Mek into the Predator I would have the game sewn up.

By now I had set up over 30 miniatures – almost as many models as in the entire Space Marine force – and was rapidly running out of room on my left flank for further 'front line' units to take part in the attack on the Predator. Because of this I decided to use my remaining assault units – namely Ghazghkull, the Goff Nobs and the vehicles – to launch a flank attack on my right. I was fairly certain that Andy would place his heavy weapons on the large hill facing the right hand side of my table, where they would have a good line of sight to the Predator and I hoped that my fast moving mechanised units would be able to overrun this position. Then they could sweep on round behind the Space Marines who would be attacking the Predator and fall on them from behind.

The next two units I set up were my Death Skulls and the Shokk Attack Gun team. These units were equipped with heavy weapons and would provide almost all of the supporting fire for the attack. I therefore placed them on the two hills on my edge of the table where they could see as much of the battlefield as possible. The Gretchin joined the Shokk Attack Gun team on the hill on my left to act as a screen for that weapon while the Death Skulls were set up in cover on the rocky hill that they occupied. I hoped that neither unit would have to move at all over the course of the battle from these dominating and well-protected positions. This meant that they would be able to keep up a constant barrage of fire with their heavy weapons.

This left me with the Bad Moons and the Dreadnought to set up. As I didn't have enough room to fit them in the front line with my Evil Sunz and Goffs, I decided to place them in support, just behind the main attacking mobs. The Bad Moons' heavy weapons were placed on the same hill as the Shokk Attack Gun so they could provide extra supporting fire.

My overall plan, then, was a simple and direct one, as befits a large but unwieldy army like the Orks. My Goffs and Evil Sunz, supported by the Bad Moons, would rush forward and swamp any Space Marines near the Predator. The Mekaniak would then grab the plans and either drive or run with them for my edge of the table. On the right Ghazghkull, the Nobz and the vehicles would overrun the large hill opposite my right and then swing round in support of the attack on the Predator. Finally, the Shokk Attack Gun and Death Skulls would lay down heavy weapons fire in support of these two attacks and try to force the Space Marines to keep their heads down.

GHAZGHKULL THRAKA'S ORK WARBAND

GROTNOB'S DEATH SKULL MOB

Grotnob – Nob, plasma pistol, power armour, bolt pistol. **3 Death Skulls** – flak armour, bolters. **2 Death Skulls** – flak armour, heavy bolters, bolt pistols. **2 Death Skulls** – flak armour, heavy stubbers, bolt pistols. **1 Death Skull** – flak armour, heavy plasma gun, bolt pistol.

GOFF BIGMOB

15 Goffs – flak armour, bolters, bolt pistol & frag stikk bomz. **5 Skarboyz** – flak armour, bolters, bolt pistols & frag stikk bomz (1 with a heavy plasma gun and 1 with a heavy bolter)

GROG'S EVIL SUNZ MOB

Grog – Nob, flak armour, bolt pistol, power fist. **7 Evil Sunz** – flak armour, bolters, bolt pistols. **1 Evil Sun** – flak armour, multi-melta, bolt pistol. **Mekaniak** – flak armour, kustom meltagun, bolt pistol, refraktor field.

MORGOG'S BAD MOON MOB

Morgog – Bigboss, power armour, kombi-weapon. **6 Bad Moons** – flak armour, bolters. **1 Bad Moon** – flak armour, lascannon, bolt pistol. **1 Bad Moon** – flak armour, autocannon, bolt pistol.

SHOKK ATTACK TEAM

Mekaniak – flak armour, Shokk Attack Gun, bolt pistol.

Runtherd: flak armour, bolt pistol, whip.
4 Snotling bases

5 Gretchin

Weirdboy – flak armour.
2 Minderz – flak armour, bolters.

VEHICLES

Kaptin – flak armour, bolt pistol.
5 Orks – flak armour, bolt pistols.

1 Warbuggy

2 Warbikes

1 Wartrak

GHAZGHKULL'S MOB

Warlord Ghazghkull Thraka & his Gretchin sidekick Makari – kustom meltagun, kustom bolter, power sword.

Nobz Mob: 6 Goff Nobz – power armour, boltguns, bolt pistols, power fists, bionik bitz, frag and krak stikkbomz, buzz bombs, knives, clubs and swords etc.

1 Painboy

Ghazghkull's Battlewagon

1 Dreadnought

SPACE WOLF BATTLEPLAN

(Andy Chambers)

This was the first time for ages that I'd fought a Warhammer 40,000 battle against the Orks. I knew that Jervis's Ork force was very numerous, and would include a bigmob of about twenty Goffs and several other large mobs of Boyz. Warbikes and wartraks would doubtless also be in evidence, as well as a Dreadnought or two. Against this major force of Orks I could muster only a handful of Space Wolf packs, one of Blood Claws, one of Grey Hunters and one of Long Fangs. Fortunately, I could call upon the not inconsiderable prowess of Ragnar Blackmane, Brother Ulrik, Njal Stormcaller and the Wolf Guard to toughen up the wolf brothers. I was tempted to included some brother Marines from the Ultramarines or the Blood Angels to increase my firepower. However, the number of troops the Orks would field and the closeness of the terrain meant close combat was inevitable and I decided that a purely Space Wolf force would be better suited to fighting its way to the objective and back.

After totalling up the value of my three squads I began to add on the extra points for weapon upgrades and changes to my units. I equipped the Blood Claws with a particularly deadly combination of close combat weapons such as power fists, plasma pistols, hand flamers, power swords and the like. I also equipped five of my Grey Hunters with assorted close combat weapons. The Long Fangs' sergeant was armed with a power axe and one was given a lascannon to give them some extra punch against any Ork vehicles or Dreadnoughts. The additional cost of these weapon upgrades meant that I'd spent over half my points on squads but I thought that it was well worth the cost.

I toyed with the idea of using some vehicle support such as our Blood Angel land speeder or Dreadnought but I had a feeling the terrain was a bit too tight to risk running into Orks at close quarters. If they were equipped with krak stikkbomz the results would be very painful.

Next I added on the points for Ragnar, Ulrik and Njal – I felt confident that they would pay for themselves once battle was joined. Ragnar in particular is very tough in hand-to-hand combat. Brother Ulrik would ensure I had no morale problems, and Njal's powerful psychic abilities would also hopefully help to redress the balance against the Orkish hordes. I spent the bulk of my remaining points on four Wolf Guard in Terminator armour, arming one with a heavy flamer and one with the rightly feared assault cannon.

I couldn't quite afford the Wolf Guard sergeant, so I used my remaining points to buy extra equipment. I bought the Long Fangs a supply of plasma missiles and supplied krak grenades to five of the Grey Hunters. I gave photon flash flares to the Blood Claws (these are particularly useful for close combat troops as they can be used at close quarters without fear of accidentally blinding the Space Marines). This gobbled up my remaining points nicely, so now I just had to organise my troops for the task in hand.

I decided to break the Grey Hunters and Blood Claws down into battle squads which would supply me with a total of five five-man squads. I also divided the squads so as to ensure that I obtained the best mixture of weapons. For example, the Grey Hunters were split into one battle squad armed with bolters and krak grenades and the other armed with bolters and close combat weapons led by the sergeant. I divided the Wolf Guard amongst the Grey Hunters and Blood Claws so that one would accompany each battle squad. This would give each squad, in effect, a small Dreadnought to support them!

THE BATTLE PLAN

I didn't have too much time to think about my plan and deployment, so I decided to take a direct approach to the problem. I wanted to start the game with as large a part of my force hidden as possible. This would enable me to avoid taking too many casualties if the Orks won the first turn. This strictly limited where I could deploy because the hidden units have to be placed in cover.

I knew that because the Orks vastly outnumbered me, I would need to avoid big attritional gun battles at all costs and use plenty of cover to cut down on the effectiveness of the Orks' fire. Of course, the Space Wolves truly excel at close combat, so I had no fears about getting to grips with the Orks at close quarters, even though sheer weight in numbers can sometimes bring down the toughest individual.

I placed Ragnar with a battle squad of Blood Claws in hiding behind the low hill next to the swamp. They were supported by Wolf Guard Olaf, armed with the heavy flamer. I reasoned that this squad would be the one most likely to get into close combat with the Orks, hence the placement of Ragnar and Olaf here. Also hidden amongst the craters behind the ruined temple were the Grey Hunter battle squad armed with close combat weapons and the other Blood Claw battle squad. These were accompanied by Brother Ulrik plus Thorolf and Gunnar.

I placed the Long Fangs on overwatch up on the rocky hill on my left flank. From here they would have a good field of fire across the battlefield and also some cover against enemy fire. I placed the other battle squad of Grey Hunters (also in overwatch) on the slopes behind them to guard the Long Fangs' flank against any Orks who tried to sweep round the rocks. I also reinforced this group with Njal Stormcaller and Wolf Guard Egil because they were rather out on a limb.

The plan was for Ragnar and the Blood Claws to rush forward and seize the Predator and either drive off in it or grab the plans and run. In either case they would first head off behind the ruins (because they afforded more cover) and then off the edge of the table. The two squads in the craters behind the ruined temple would first move into the temple itself and supply covering fire for Ragnar. From there they could then either charge out to help Ragnar get to the plans or fight a rearguard action as Ragnar and the Blood Claws pulled back after seizing the plans.

The Long Fangs had a reasonable line of fire through the ruins and to the rocky hill in the centre of the Orks' line, so they could supply long range fire support by shooting at any Orks loitering around with heavy weapons and pick off any vehicles they could see. I had bought plasma missiles for the two Long Fangs missile launchers, so I also had the option of dropping a curtain of plasma in front of the Orks if they massed in one area.

NOTE: This game was fought during the development of the Warhammer 40,000 game and the accompanying Codex army lists. At the time both armies were costed at 2000 points (in fact they both exactly 1998 points). Since the game was fought the army lists have been changed somewhat, and the Ork army has been further developed in other respects too. This makes it impossible to work out a points value exactly, so we've decided to present the armies as they were on that fateful day as the dust clouds rise in the north and barbaric Orkish cries are carried by the wind, "'Ere We Go, 'Ere We Go, 'Ere We Go....".

RAGNAR BLACKMANE'S SPACE WOLVES

Ragnar Blackmane: Space Wolf Lord – power armour, bolt pistol, chainsword, frag and krak grenades.

Ulrik the Slayer: Wolf Priest – bolt pistol, plasma pistol, crozius; frag, krak, virus and toxin grenades.

Njal Stormcaller: Rune Priest – power armour, bolt pistol, force rod, frag and krak grenades.

GREY HUNTER PACK

Grey Hunter Sergeant – power sword, plasma pistol, bio scanner.

Grey Hunter Veteran – power fist, bolt pistol, krak grenades.

5 Grey Hunters – boltgun, krak grenades.
3 Grey Hunters – boltgun, (1 with power sword, 1 with chainsword, 1 with power axe).

LONG FANG PACK

Long Fang Sergeant – power axe, boltgun (targeter).

2 Long Fangs – missile launcher (targeter and suspensors, frag, super krak and plasma missiles)
1 Long Fang – heavy bolter (targeter and suspensors, hellfire shells)
1 Long Fang – lascannon (targeter and suspensors).

BLOOD CLAW PACK

Blood Claw Sergeant – chainsword, power fist, bio scanner.

Blood Claw Veteran – hand flamer, power fist.

2 Blood Claws – hand flamer, (1 with a power sword and 1 with a chainsword)
3 Blood Claws – plasma pistol, (1 with a power sword, 1 with a chainsword and 1 with a power fist)
3 Blood Claws – 1 with a power sword, 1 with a power axe and 1 with a power fist

WOLF GUARD TERMINATORS

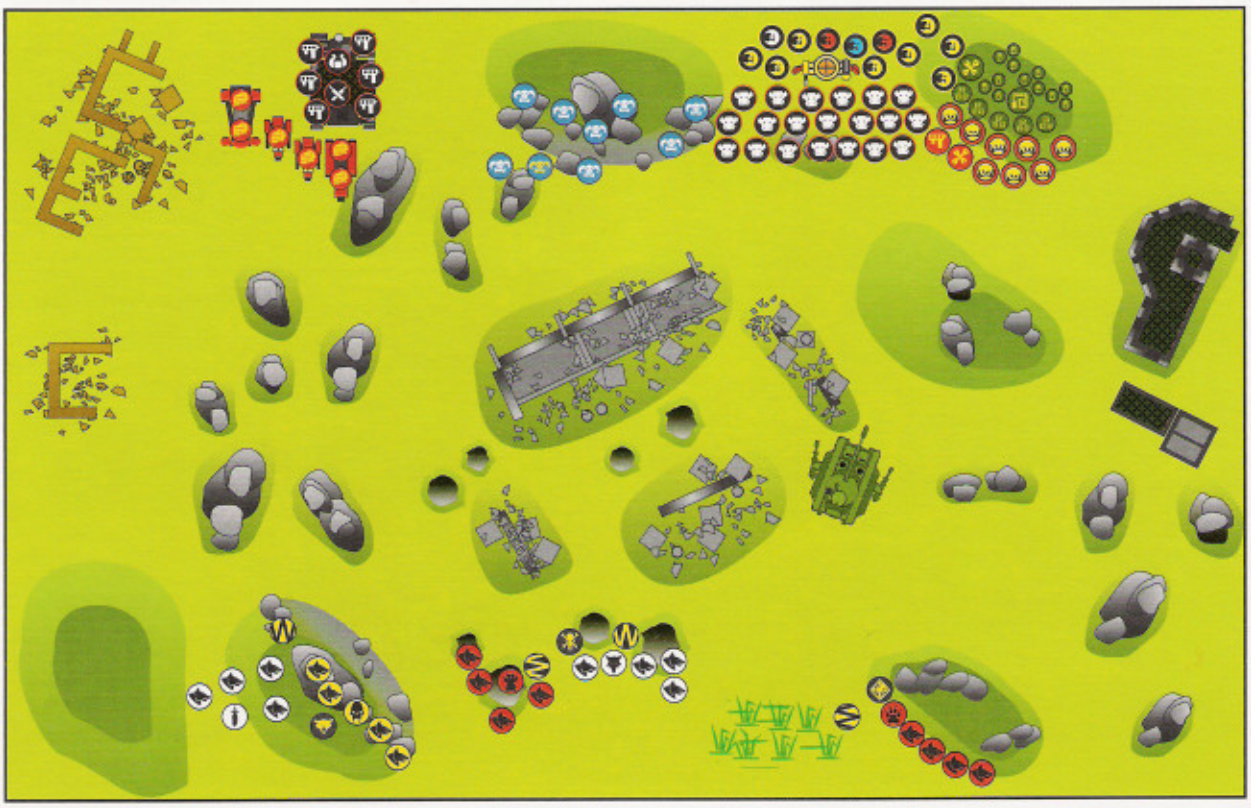
Brother Olaf – heavy flamer, power fist.

Brother Egil – storm bolter, power fist.

Brother Gunnar – assault cannon, chainfist.

Brother Thorolf – storm bolter, chainfist.

DEPLOYMENT



GHAZGHKULL THRAKA'S ORK WARBAND

Death Skulls Grotnob's Mob

Goff Bigmob

Evil Sunz Grog's Mob

Weirdboy & Minderz

Bad Moons Morgog's Mob

Shokk Attack Gun

Runtherd & Snotlings

Warbuggy

Warbike

Wartrak

Ghazghkull's battlewagon, Nobz Mob and Painboy.

Dreadnought

RAGNAR BLACKMANE'S SPACE WOLVES

Ragnar Blackmane Wolf Lord

Ulrik the Slayer Wolf Priest

Njal Stormcaller Rune Priest

GREY HUNTER PACK

Sergeant

Battle Squad Leader

Grey Hunter

LONG FANGS PACK

Sergeant

Long Fang

BLOOD CLAWS

Sergeant

Battle Squad Leader

Blood Claw

WOLF GUARD

Brother Olaf

Brother Egil

Brother Gunnar

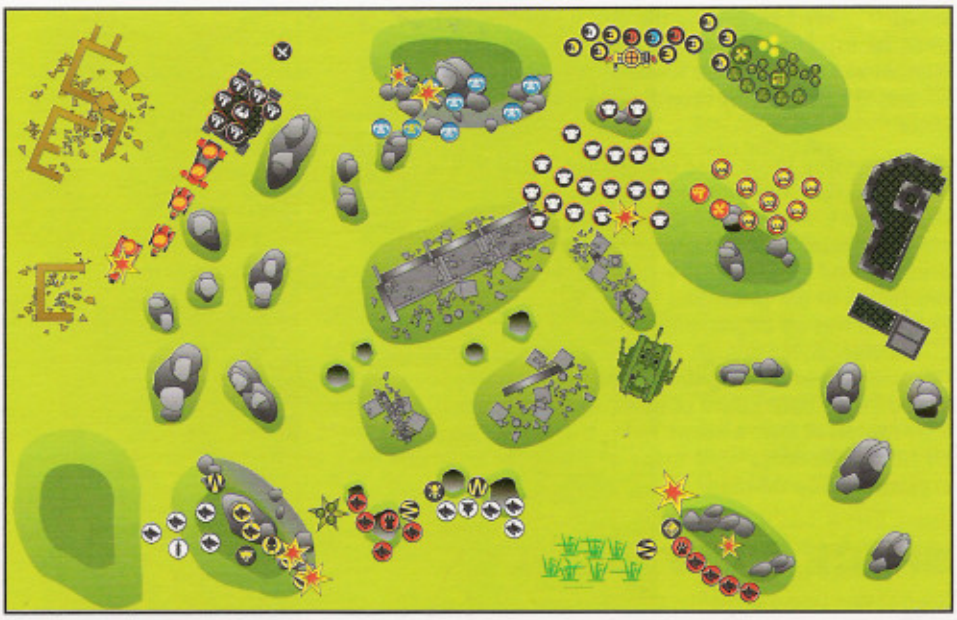
Brother Thorolf

ORK TURN 1

The Ork attack began as soon as the first pale light of dawn illuminated the horizon. Bellowing fearsome battle cries, the Goff bigmob surged forward, supported on their left by Grog and his Evil Sunz.

Further to the right, the Orks joyfully kick-started the engines of their vehicles into life and with a screech of burning rubber accelerated away to sweep round the Space Wolves' flank.

The deeper rumble of Ghazghkull's battlewagon added to the cacophony of sound on the Orks' right flank as it rolled forward. As the battlewagon began to gather speed, Mad Doc Grotsnik suddenly leapt to his feet. "No! No!" he cried, "Not that way Boyz! Quick, follow meeeeee!" And with that he jumped off the battlewagon and charged off towards the Orks' camp to the rear of the battlefield.



ORK TURN 1

Ghazghkull and the rest of his retinue, well used to Grotsnik's antics, watched him head off with not a little relief. At least he wouldn't get in the way now. Ghazghkull's attention was wrenched back to the battlefield as a hail of fire erupted from the Long Fangs and Grey Hunters hidden on the rocky hill

THE ORKS CHARGE FORWARD TOWARDS THE PREDATOR AS RAGNAR, EGIL AND THE BLOOD CLAWS EMERGE FROM COVER.

ahead. The wartrak leading the attack swerved and flipped over, its driver torn apart by a hail of bolter shells. Frag missiles and lascannon fire tore into the Death Skulls and the advancing Goffs, killing several of them as the Boyz dived for cover.

These opening shots were quickly answered by the Death Skulls and Bad Moons who had been waiting in support and two of the Long Fangs went down as autocannon shells, stubber fire and the flickering light of lascannon beams thudded into their position. The Shokk Attack Gun also whirred up to full power and launched an attack at the Long Fangs but was off-target, spilling frenzied Snotlings just short of the hill. Even though everything was going to plan, Ghazghkull had nagging doubts. The Long Fangs and Grey Hunters were only a third of the Space Wolves force. Where were the rest of them hidden? To his left, he could see that the Death Skulls were also firing towards the Predator as explosions lit up the ruins.

SPACE WOLF TURN 1

A great howl went up as the Grey Hunters and Blood Claws leapt up from concealed positions amongst the craters and rushed forward into the ruined temple led by the Wolf Guard and Brother Ulrik. On the right, Ragnar and the other battle squad of Blood Claws sprinted towards the armoured bulk of the Predator. Almost immediately, the Space Wolves came under fire from the Ork Dreadnought directly ahead of them. Brother Thorolf took a lascannon hit which melted through his armour but miraculously failed to vapourise his flesh. One of the Blood Claws was equally lucky, his armour barely deflecting a heavy plasma blast that would have burned him to cinders. Brother Gunnar turned his assault cannon on the great metal beast, the torrent of shells ripped ragged gashes across its midriff until green blood spurted amongst the oil and the Dreadnought fell silent.

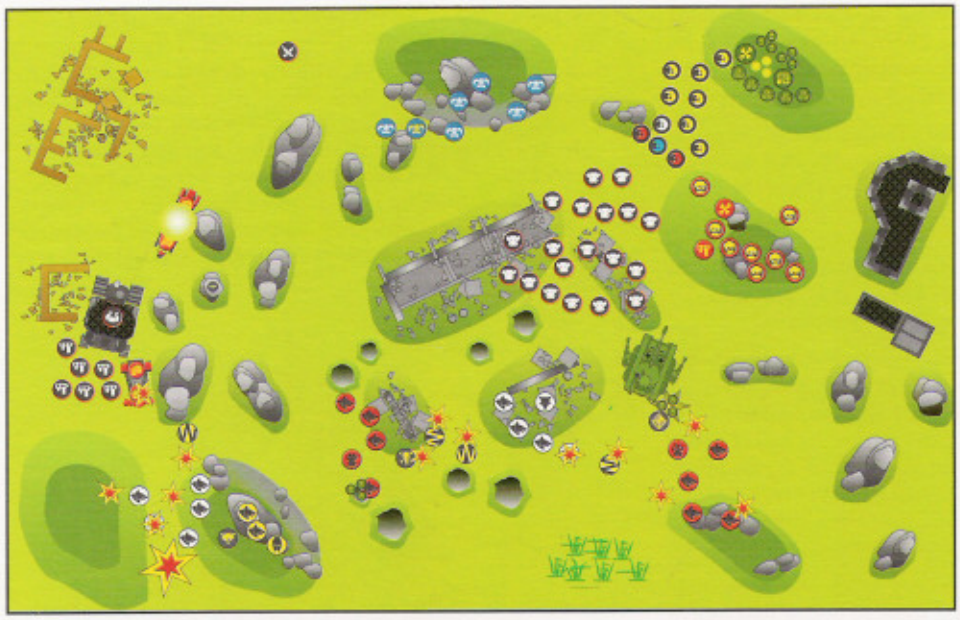
The Blood Claws hurled grenades at the nearby Snotlings but they all flew wide and the little gremlins scurried on madly towards them. The Long Fangs sergeant cut down several of them with bolter fire from his position on the hill but the screaming creatures seemed not to notice. Behind the sergeant

the Long Fangs unleashed another volley of missiles into the Ork horde. A plasma missile exploded amongst rocks where the Death Skulls lurked, the incandescent flash making them flinch but caused no casualties.

A second plasma missile homed in on the Bad Moons, blossoming into a ball of fire where their heavy weapons Boyz stood. One of them managed to stagger out of the fire but the other fried where he stood. The Grey Hunters on the left flank blasted long range shots at a distant warbike, but failed to hit the rider, their bolter shells ringing off the bike's sturdy frame instead.

Unnoticed by Ghazghkull, a black-winged shape swooped between the rocks. Njal Stormcaller gazed down through the eyes of Night Wing, his psyber-raven, at the rapidly approaching Ork column. Realizing that he had to slow them down before they broke through onto the Long Fangs' flank, he concentrated his mind. A nimbus of crackling light grew around him as he exerted his powers to summon a great wind storm. A tumultuous blast suddenly engulfed the warbikes, clogging their engines and blinding their riders with flying dust. Caught in the elemental power of the blast, the Orks could do little more than cling onto their stalled bikes in the teeth of the howling gale.

SPACE WOLVES TURN 1



ORK TURN 2

Grog and the Evil Sunz approached more cautiously, attempting to pin down Ragnar and his bodyguard of Blood Claws with bolter fire.

The Bad Moons rushed forward to support the Goffs, dragging their protesting and struggling Weirdboy with them as they went. Surrounded on all sides by frenzied Goffs and Bad Moons, the Weirdboy started to shake and gibber as he sucked up the psychic energy of the Orks like a sponge.

Sparks and weird lights began to shoot out of his mouth and ears, but his Minderz held him fast and gripped him tight. There were too many Orks in between the Weirdboy and the Space Wolves to allow him to unleash one of his strange and powerful attacks just yet. Behind the ruined temple, the frenzied Snotlings pounced on a nearby Blood Claw, who kept them at bay with sweeps of his chainsword and sprayed them with liquid fire from his hand flamer.

ORK TURN 2

Enraged at the sight of the hated Space Wolves and incensed by the death of their companions, the Goff bigmob went into the dreaded Goff Battle Rage. With a great howl, they bounded forward firing their bolters in a deadly explosive arc.

THE NOBZ ATTEMPT TO DISLODGE THE LONG FANGS FROM THEIR POSITION ON TOP OF THE HILL

Ragnar also found himself engulfed by a another horde of Snotlings launched at him by the Shokk Attack Gun, but the tiny creatures proved no match for his battle skills and he cut his way through them without breaking his stride.

On the Orks' right flank the only vehicles that could move were the war buggy and the battlewagon, the two warbikes remaining firmly in place, paralysed by Njal's wind blast. Dipping and weaving, the war buggy hurtled towards the Space Wolves silhouetted up on the hill. Ecstatic from the speed and noise, the driver expertly avoided the incoming fire from the Space Wolves before his gunner unleashed a wildly inaccurate melta blast over the heads of his tormentors.

Meanwhile, Ghazghkull's battlewagon roared up beside the war buggy and came screeching to a halt as the Nobz piled out and started to blaze away at the Grey Hunters on the hill. It seemed impossible that anyone could survive the hail of bolter shells and heavy weapons fire that rained down on the Space Wolves as the entire Ork battleline let fly with every weapon they had. However, the Orks were gripped by a battle rage and their fire, never very accurate, was even wilder than usual.

Expertly taking advantage of every scrap of cover, their lightning fast reactions allowing them to dodge and weave away from danger, the Space Wolves took everything the Orks could throw at them and came through it almost unscathed. Only two Wolf brothers fell to the massed fire of the Orks. The tide of battle was starting to turn in the Space Wolves' favour.

On the left the Long Fangs hit the Death Skull Orks with another plasma missile, the incandescent flames burning through Orks and rocks with equal abandon. The Grey Hunters guarding their flank advanced to attack Ghazghkull and his Nobz head on. Frag grenades exploded with shocking violence, slaying two of the Nobz instantly and almost decapitating the Ork gunner on the war buggy as he tried to bring his multi-melta to bear on Egil's hulking, armoured figure. The staccato bark of Egil's storm bolter cut through the roaring explosions as he cut down another Nob and the buggy driver.

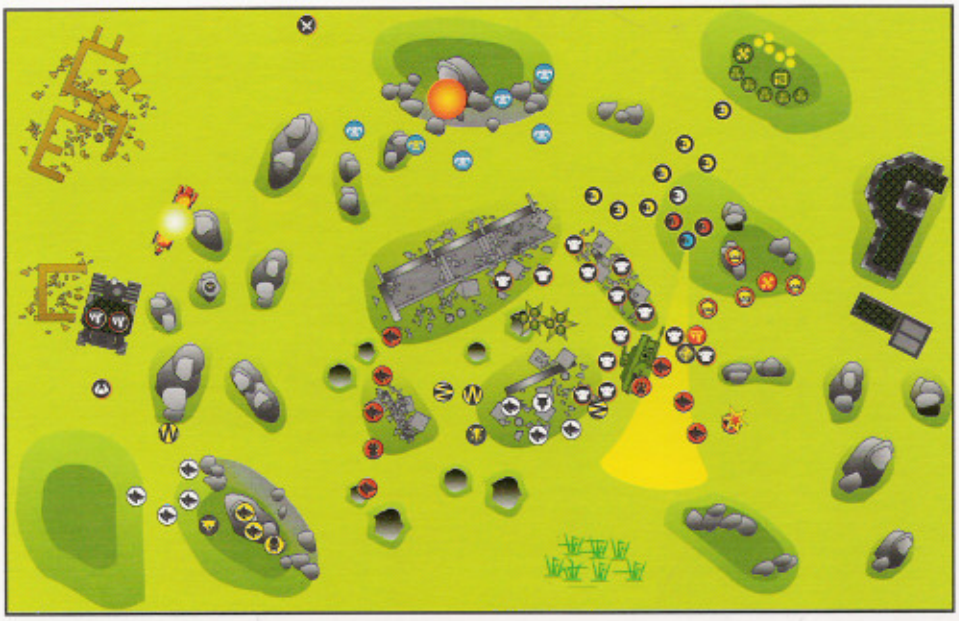
SPACE WOLF TURN 2

Ragnar weaved forward through the chaos of explosions and bolter fire to reach the Predator, from where he paused to hurl a frag grenade into the advancing Goffs, blowing three of them to pieces. Behind him two of the Blood Claws leapt into the Predator to retrieve the plans, their brothers rushing forward to throw photon flares amongst the nearby Evil Sunz Orks. The grenades flashed blinding white like miniature suns and sent the Orks stumbling back clutching at their eyes. Brother Olaf advanced with the Blood Claws, hosing liquid fire over the Goffs that had made it to the rubble, turning two into guttering torches.

The squads in the ruined temple took up positions in the rubble and blasted the advancing Goffs with bolter fire and frag grenades to support Ragnar's advance. Ulrik hurled his virus bomb into the battle-maddened Orks as they spilled into the ruins but the bacillus proved weak and only one of the Orks succumbed. Thorolf and Gunnar stepped forward into the breach and carved bloody arcs through the horde with their storm bolter and assault cannon to keep the Orks back. The Blood Claw fighting the Snotlings behind the ruins finally cut down the last of the tiny burning figures with his chainsword.

It was all too much for the surviving Nobz. Ignoring Ghazghkull's bellowed threats, they ran for cover behind the battlewagon. The triumphant Grey Hunters shot down another Nob as he fled and hurled krak grenades at the battlewagon, but the grenades did little more than gouge chunks out of the vehicle's thick armour. The battlewagon driver briefly gunned his engine in anticipation of running down these annoying humies before a krak missile from the Long Fangs tore off the battlewagon's front wheel, sending it slewing sideways before it skidded to a halt. Brows knitted with concentration, Njal maintained his stormwind against the warbikes, holding them fast amidst a swirling vortex of dust.

SPACE WOLVES TURN 2



ORK TURN 3

ORK TURN 3

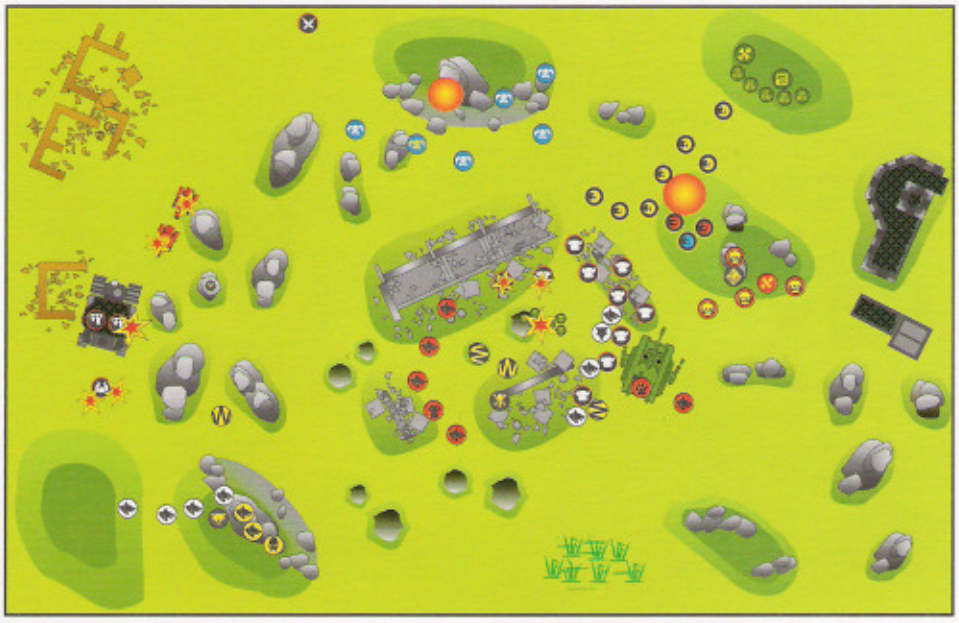
Ghazghkull knew that he had to do something soon otherwise the battle would be lost. Raising his eyes skyward, he concentrated his mental energies and called on Mork and Gork to aid him. Filled with the strange energy of the savage Ork gods, Ghazghkull bellowed his defiance at the Space Wolves, his cry being taken up by Ork after Ork, until the shouted WAAAGH! resounded all over the battlefield. At the back of the Ork army, Grotnob and his Death Skulls grabbed the opportunity to start scavenging for loot now that no-one was watching them. They would play no further part in the battle.

The rest of the Orks carried on with the attack. The Goffs and the Evil Sunz charged the Space Wolves around the Predator, Grog and two Goffs engaging Ragnar in hand-to-hand combat. Morgog and the rest of his Bad Moons followed up in support, the Weirdboy dragged along by his two Minderz. On the right, Ghazghkull and Makari leapt from the wrecked battlewagon and rushed towards the Space Wolves on the hill. Their places in the battlewagon were taken by the Nobz, who did their best to provide supporting fire for Ghazghkull as he advanced.

BATTLE ERUPTS AROUND THE PREDATOR AS THE POWER OF THE WAAAGH! SENDS THE ORKS INTO A FRENZY

Once again Ork fire rained down on the Space Wolves, but the Orks' shooting proved even more inaccurate than before and only one Space Wolf fell to the massed fire of the Ork army.

The Shokk Attack Gun once again went haywire, and the last two groups of Snotlings materialised in the centre of the ruined temple rather than inside the Predator as intended. The battle would be decided by the hand-to-hand combat between the Orks and Space Wolves around the stranded tank.



SPACE WOLVES TURN 3

Filled with divinely inspired battle fury, the Orks hurled themselves at the Space Wolves. Frothing and yelling they slashed and cut at the Space Marines with berserk frenzy. Ragnar quickly dispatched the two Goffs as they charged at him, but was then smashed to the ground by Grog's mighty powerfist. Towering over the prone figure, Grog prepared to deliver the killing blow that could still turn the tide in favour of the Orks. Then, with a loud "SNIK!", the battle claws in Ragnar's boots slashed out, eviscerating the surprised Ork Nob before driving into his heart. Grog was dead before he hit the ground.

Inspired by the example set by their Lord, the Space Wolves redoubled their efforts. The Orks' wild attacks proved no match for the equally savage battle skills of the Space Wolves. Ork after Ork went down in a welter of green blood without the Space Wolves taking a single casualty.

Ragnar bounded to his feet just in time to see the Orks make their last desperate bid to capture the Predator and the vital plans it contained. Grabbing an arm and a leg each, the two Bad Moon minderz grabbed the Weirdboy and pointed him head first at the vehicle, like a living cannon. The Weirdboy vomited forth the terrible energies that coursed through his body and a tidal wave of deadly, incandescent psychic energy rolled towards the Predator.

Hurling himself to one side, Ragnar dodged out of the way of the death wave, but the Blood Claws in and around the Predator were not so lucky. Bowled over by the sheer force of the psychic attack they fell to the ground, clutching their heads in agony. Two died as the wave passed over them, and the survivors lay stunned, unable to do anything.

SPACE WOLF TURN 3

With a howl the Grey Hunters in the ruined temple leapt into combat with the Goffs around the Predator. Ahead of them, Ragnar stormed up the hill in a battle rage. He cut down an Evil Sunz Ork with a multi-melta before leaping forward to attack the Minderz surrounding the cringing Weirdboy. Inspired by their Wolf Lord's example the Grey Hunters hacked down three Goffs, their power axes and chainswords cleaving through the Orks like knives through butter.

Gunnar and Thorolf advanced through the ruins, illuminated by the strobing gun flashes as they cut down another pair of Orks. The chatter of Gunnar's assault cannon echoed across the battlefield until it was silenced by a jam. Rushing up behind them, the Blood Claws hurled photon flares amongst the yelling Snotlings, blinding them with actinic flashes until the little creatures' screeching became almost unbearable.

Around the Predator, the surviving Blood Claws slowly recovered from the devastating psychic attack, saved from being butchered where they lay only by the fierce counter-charge of Ragnar and the rest of the Space Wolves. The Orks had been beaten off and now the Predator and its vital cargo lay firmly in the Space Wolves' grasp.

Missiles leapt out from the Long Fangs' positions. A krak missile ricocheted off the armoured fuel tank of Ghazghkull's battlewagon, much to the relief of the Nobz inside it. Another missile burst at the feet of the Bad Moons' Nob, Morgog, instantly engulfing him in unquenchable plasma fire. Egil slipped away behind the rock spire and gunned down one of the stalled warbikers with a long burst of storm bolter fire.

A sharp-eyed Grey Hunter in the rocks behind Egil caught sight of the other warbike and killed its rider with a neat bolter shot between the eyes. The rest of the Grey Hunters backed away from Ghazghkull, their bolter shells bouncing off his glowing form. The psychic power of the Waaagh! still coursed through him, making him invulnerable to the Grey Hunters' weapons.

Njal allowed the wind blast slowly die down. It had served its purpose and now the only real threat was Ghazghkull himself. The old Rune Priest marshalled his strength and prepared to meet Ghazghkull's deadly powers head on. He was determined to stop the rampages of this brutal Ork Warlord once and for all or die trying. As he gazed down from the hill, he realized that Ghazghkull was gone. Hidden by the smoke and flames, the Ork Warlord had made good his escape. He'd realized that this battle was lost, but there would be many others. The galaxy would hear of Ghazghkull Uruk Thraka again. With their leader gone, the remaining Orks withdrew into the rocky hills like wraiths, thwarted for the present but still as dangerous as ever.

SPACE WOLF DEBRIEFING

(Andy Chambers)

Well, everything went more or less according to plan, mainly because Jervis set up his Orks pretty much where I thought he would, even down to putting a force out on his flank to take the hill with the Long Fangs on it. Under the circumstances, it was just as well I put Njal and a battle squad of Grey Hunters over there to support the Long Fangs, otherwise Ghazghkull and his motorised troops would have been all over them like a rash. It was a bit of a gamble on Jervis's part to undertake such a bold outflanking move, but if it had come off it would have thrown my plans into complete confusion by cutting me off from my own table edge. In the event, it was stopped mostly by the combined efforts of Njal Stormcaller living up to his name and the Wolf Guard Egil, who singlehandedly rampaged through three Nobz, a war buggy and a warbike!

But self congratulations aside, it was pretty dumb of me to dedicate a third of my forces to one remote corner of the table which was nowhere near my objective. If Jervis had not gone for the flank attack, or had dedicated a smaller force to it, my meagre three squads in the centre would have been overrun. As it was, I think that the Orks in the centre badly lacked the kind of hardness that Ghazghkull and the Nobz could have supplied. Unimpeded, Ragnar and his squads ran riot through the Orks and there was little they could do to stop him. Even in the round when Ghazghkull unleashed the Waaagh! the Goffs which actually made it into close combat suffered badly for no loss to the Space Wolves. The only severe losses I suffered in the centre were from the Weirdboy's psychic effects, which gave me a nasty fright but came at a time when the Orks were just about running out of momentum. I was incredibly lucky to avoid taking more casualties than I did, though I did take care to use whatever cover I could to minimise Jervis's chances of hitting

The other slight spanner in the works was the Snotlings pinning down the Blood Claws in the ruins for a turn, an annoying incident, but not too damaging overall. A minor

THE BLOOD CLAWS AND THE GREY HUNTERS ENGAGE THE ORKS IN BITTER HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT

point which had struck me about the deployment of the Blood Claws in the ruins was that I should have placed them closer to the Predator, in effect swapping their place with the Grey Hunters. This was because the Blood Claws were out of range with their bolt pistols and grenades until Turn 3, whereas the bolter-armed Grey Hunters wouldn't have had such problems. This is a minor point, but little details often add up to victory or defeat in a close-run battle. On the whole, I also think I used the Long Fangs in a rather disorganised manner, tending to snipe at available targets instead of concentrating on crippling one mob of Boyz per turn.

Of my three characters Brother Ulrik never made it into close combat so he didn't make much impression, even his virus bomb failed abysmally. Njal did sterling service where he was, but was a little bit surplus to requirements there. Placing Egil and all of the Grey Hunters on overwatch on Turn 1 probably would have done just as good a job of keeping the vehicles at bay. If Njal had been somewhere in the centre his powers would have made life a lot easier – the Weirdboy certainly wouldn't have lived long enough to get off his death wave! Ragnar was every bit as unstoppable as I'd hoped he would be and his ability to dodge saved him from being hit numerous times – a truly inspirational character!

Overall, I think that in the rush to deploy my forces and get playing I overlooked the main objective of the game. Fortunately, Jervis also made the same mistake and deployed more for a normal knock down and drag out kind of a battle. Unfortunately for him, Jervis compounded his problems by spreading his efforts across his whole front, trying to inflict casualties here and there and then making a half-hearted stab at taking the Predator with the Goffs after they had already suffered a horrendous beating.

WAAAGH!

(Jervis Johnson)

Well then, that was a bit of a disaster, wasn't it! Although I do have to say that the dice were not kind in the way they rolled for me in this game, I can't really use that as an excuse to hide the fact that my set-up and execution of my plan where both fatally flawed. One of the good things about writing a battle report is that it forces you to study what happened in a game very carefully. If I hadn't had to write this report I would probably have done my best to forget about this game, which would have been a shame, because it actually had a number of important lessons to teach me.

If you've had a game where nothing seems to work out right it's very easy to end up blaming your defeat on all kinds of things other than the way you played the game. I've lost count of the number of times I've heard players (including myself!) bemoaning their bad luck or saying that, thanks to the army lists, their opponent's army is unbeatable, while their own army is rubbish.

However, if you want to learn from your defeats and go on to become a better player, you must attempt to see through these excuses to what really happened. Even more importantly, you should try to do this while the game is in progress.

Part of the reason that I lost so badly is because I became completely demoralised with the way my troops couldn't hit the side of a barn door, while the Space Wolves were merrily gunning down my Boyz in droves! As I suffered over 30 casualties to the Space Marines' 7 (a kill ratio of over 4-1!) this is somewhat understandable. Anyway, by about midway through the game I felt that my bad dice rolling and the Orks' relatively low ballistic skill meant that I never really stood a chance of winning. Mentally I had given up and was thinking "If only I was a bit luckier and had a Space Marine army I could easily win". But in actual fact, as I will explain below, I did have a very good chance to win, I just didn't see it!

When you are playing a game you must always keep your main objective clearly in your mind. This may seem obvious, but it is actually quite easy to forget. In this game all I had to do to win was grab the plans from the Predator, nothing else mattered and all of my attentions should have been focused on achieving that objective. From this point of view setting up Ghazghkull and his retinue so far to the right was a bad mistake. As my single most powerful unit Ghazghkull should have been leading the attack on the Predator, as Ragnar did for the Space Wolves. The attack on the hill would have been a sensible tactic in a game using the normal Warhammer 40,000 victory conditions, but this game had a different set of objectives which made it no more than a diversionary attack that could have been handled perfectly well by the warbikes and wartrak on their own.

But if my set up was flawed, it was nowhere near as bad as my execution of my plan. Studying what happened during the game for this report, I realised that as soon as I started to play the game I forget about the victory conditions all together! My attack on the Predator was halfhearted and slow, mainly because I had become sidetracked into trying to wipe out the Space Wolves rather than grab the plans from the Predator. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the way I directed the firing. The ranged attacks that I made and therefore the casualties I caused, few though they may have been, where spread all over the battlefield rather than being concentrated around the Predator.

What I did was attack Andy's most powerful models whenever I could, no matter where they were. This is a sensible tactic in a normal Warhammer 40,000 game, but it proved disastrous here. Imagine the situation on Turn 3 if all seven casualties that I inflicted had all been around the Predator. Instead of Andy having an overwhelming superiority, the odds would have been about even and if Ghazghkull and the Nobz had been there, the odds would have been strongly in my favour. And I could have achieved this with the same army and the same luck that I had in the game which I actually lost so disastrously.

Turning my attentions to the other side of the table I do have to say that Andy's set-up was, if anything, even worse than mine. Although he placed Ragnar in a sensible position, the vast bulk of the Space Wolves were way off to my right, and played very little part in the battle in and around the Predator. The main reason for this is because Andy likes to make sure that all of his models are set-up in cover, and that they start the game hiding in case the other side gets the first turn. This is a sensible tactic in a normal game, but in this case it forced him to spread his troops around and place them too far away from the main objective to be useful. However, once the game started there is little I can fault in Andy's execution. All of his moves were directed to getting the plans out of the Predator and winning the game, something which I singularly failed to do, and so he earned a well-deserved victory.

ANGELS OF DEATH

By Andy Chambers & Jervis Johnson

Next month sees the release of the brand new Warhammer 40,000. What better way to demonstrate the new system in action, than to publish a report of an epic game played recently at the Studio between two old adversaries – Jervis Johnson and Andy Chambers. As might be expected, the game turned out to be a bitter and close fought contest between thse two superb generals with the result hanging in the balance until the final dice roll of the very last turn.

Brother-Captain Erasmus Tycho stared out across the riot of lush, purple-green vegetation. A ruddy light spilled across the scene from the swollen red sun hauling itself over the horizon. These were the equatorial jungles that separated Armageddon Secundus from Armageddon Prime. The captain half-listened to the cacophonic dawn chorus as his red-armoured Blood Angels reported in over the comm-net.

This was where it had all begun, he thought grimly. This was where the Ork hordes of Ghazghkull Uruk Thraka smashed through the meagre border defences and descended upon the unprepared hive-cities of Armageddon Secundus in a raging torrent of fire and death. Ahead and to the right he could still see the scarred outlines of bunkers and blockhouses. The chemical defoliants which had been used to clear their fields of fire were still effective in some places. Here and there the defences stood alone in swathes cut through the verdant undergrowth.

How could the planetary governor have been so blind as to think that these rock-crete boxes and jungles would keep the Orks at bay? The monstrous, fire-belching OrkGGargants would have hardly broken their stride. Now after months of fighting and tens of thousands of deaths, the forces of humanity had fought their way back to where they had been at the start of the campaign. Now Ghazghkull Thraka was gone and most of his horde too, trapped and destroyed outside Tartarus hive by the Blood Angels and their brother-Chapters the Ultramarines and the Salamanders.

But here in the jungle isolated bands of Orks fought on. Where battle-weary Imperial Guardsmen might flag and fail, the Blood Angels were deployed to remorselessly hunt the Orks down, to destroy their camps and supplies, to finish the taskoonce and for all. He could almost sense the presence of the tens of thousands of hungry ghosts thirsting for vengeance; he felt a premonition that today they would have their revenge, but that he might be consumed in the process. If it were so he would have no regrets, the Blood Angels were no stranger to sacrifice.

Suddenly, he heard a a single chime, like the tolling of a great temple bell, resound in his comm-net earbead. He touched the rune of communication and listened to the deep bass voice of the dreadnought Furioso.

"Brother-Captain, my sensor auguries indicate a large force of Orks deploying ahead of us."

"It appears our orbital divinations were correct and the foe seek to defend their supply dump."

"Or they are simply eager for a fight, Brother-Captain. Never underestimate the Orks' thirst for battle."

"Just so, Brother Furioso, your wisdom is ever my guide. The Emperor be praised."

"The Emperor be praised."

Now in the distance Tycho's enhanced hearing could filter out the crack of bolter rounds as the Orks took potshots at the local wildlife. There was also the rumble of a large Ork vehicle, a battlewagon perhaps. Something heavy was crashing through the jungle too, possibly a dreadnought. He tested the action on his filigreed bolter, rubbing the ruby blood drop set in its casing for luck before he tapped the rune of communication again.

"Brother-Captain Tycho to all squads, engage front and prepare for battle. The Orks shall know the fury of righteousness this day."

INTRODUCTION

The revised and updated edition of Warhammer 40,000 has been under preparation here at the Studio for some considerable time. Now that it's all set to storm into the shops we thought it'd be good to have a battle report in White Dwarf using the new rules just to demonstrate what an even more exciting game it's become!

We played this game on one of our 8'x4' tables here at the Studio, and kept notes of moves and casualties as we went for later reference when writing up the conflict. Due to the difficulties of taking decent photos of a game in progress we took polaroids of the action and reshot the pictures for this article some time later with proper lighting and cameras. This technique allows us to have an uninterrupted game and still get the best photos.

Warhammer 40,000 now includes an integrated victory system which owes not a little to Space Marine and Warhammer Battle. Both players score victory points for destroying enemy vehicles, wiping out opposing squads and sooon. In addition, both players draw a 'Mission Card' at the beginningoof the game. The Mission cards give you ways of scoring bonus victory points by, for example, seizing anoobjective or killing the enemy commander. The battle is played for a pre-set number of turns (usually four) and at the end of the game the player with the most victory points is the winner.

Jervis and I agreed to choose our forces and set up the terrain before we randomly drew our Mission cards. This way our forces would have to be well balanced to cover all eventualities rather than having the luxuryoof anooptimal combination of forces for the terrain and the mission.

Once we'd picked our forces Jervis set up the terrain and we played the gameoover the courseoof an afternoon. Most people have their own favourite ways of setting up terrain. One of the most common is for one player to set up the terrain and for the other person to choose which table edge he wants to deploy on, which is what we did here.

When we revised Warhammer 40,000, we attempted to cover areas of the rules that hadn't been previously included. Terrain set-up, for example, was one of the areas that was conspicuously lacking in the original rules, and the new rules do include a system that allows both players to participate.

Likewise, there were no hard and fast rules for deployment in the original Warhammer 40,000, but this area is now probably one of the most important parts of the game. As explained later, in the new Warhammer 40,000 forces are allotted a 'strategy rating'. This dictates who deploys first and saves the bother of having to draw up maps or erect a screen across the table.

Troops are allowed to deploy up to 24" apart from eachoother but not within 12" of the table edges – this means you don't end up in opposite corners but should start close enough to get stuck in right away. The fact that one player gets to see the other player's deployment before placing his own troops on the table is an immensely powerful weapon, as this battle will hopefully demonstrate...

THE BLOOD ANGELS BATTLEPLAN

(Andy Chambers)

Ah ha! Once again an opportunity has arisen for me to unleash the most excellent Blood Angels against my old adversary Ork Warlord Johnson! In testing out all the races using the new Warhammer 40,000 rules we've found that one of the stickiest prospects is Space Marines versus Orks. The overwhelming numbers of the Orkish horde seem unstoppable with two Orks springing forward to take the place of every one you gun down. Added to this, their heavy weapons and vehicles are cheap too. Because Space Marines are much harder now, their points values have gone up to the point where you can expect to be outnumbered by at least two or three to one!

Of course the indomitable Space Marines are more than a match for paltry Orkish scum, with their Space Marine power armour (with a 3+ saving throw), excellent accuracy and close combat skills, plus their rapid fire ability (Space Marines can now fire twice if they don't move) and superb morale. Rather than breaking and fleeing when they fail a Leadership test like other troops, Space Marines merely become 'shaken' and unable to advance on the enemy. Perhaps the most telling advantage the Space Marines possess is their high strategy rating which allows them to set up second and, if they're reasonably lucky, move first too. This would be my best defence against the numerical superiority of the Orks because I would be able to set up most of my forces to engage only part of the Ork horde.

We'd decided to play our game with 1500 points a side, so I could only really afford three or four squads of Space Marines plus some support. The first thing I sorted out was my Space Marine commander, Brother-Captain Erasmus Tycho, weighing in at a hefty 90 points. At this early stage I was content to equip him with a humble boltgun and move on with the hopeoof returning to buy him some Wargear cards later. I skipped picking any more characters until I had selected my squads.

I didn't know which Mission card I would draw for the game so I tried to choose a selection of squads that would cover most eventualities. First choice was one of the ubiquitous and quite excellent Space Marine Tactical squads, this would give me a flexible unit that would be able to push forward against the Orks or hold their ground with equal ability. Space Marine squads are unusual in that they are, by tradition, selected as 10-man units and then broken down into two 5-man Combat squads for deployment.

I broke the Tactical squad down into Squad Paulus with a flamer and Squad Mephisto with a missile launcher. This is my usual preference for squad splitting: the flamer squad operates up front with the missile launcher squad close behind to give heavier support as necessary. As an additional refinement I bought Sergeant Paulus a chainsword and placed him with the flamer squad to give it a little more bite in hand-to-hand combat. The Tactical squad with missile launcher, flamer and chainsword came to 354 points. Added to the cost of Brother-Captain Tycho, this brought my total so far to 447 points.

The second squad I selected was a Blood Angels Space Marine Devastator squad. A Devastator squad trades off the flexibility of the Tactical squad for the brute firepower of four heavy weapons. This particular squad included a missile launcher, lascannon, heavy bolter and a heavy plasma gun. Ordinarily I would split a Devastator squad down into one Combat squad including all of the heavy weapons plus the sergeant, and another Combat squad comprising the remaining Space Marines armed with boltguns.

For this battle, however, I wanted to spread the heavy weapons around a little bit more for extra flexibility. To this end I formed Squad Adorno including the heavy bolter and heavy plasma gun, while Squad Ariosto included the lascannon and missile launcher. This placed both of the medium and long ranged weapons together in different squads and gave each squad a weapon for gunning down troops and a weapon for destroying vehicles. I also bought Sergeant Adorno a power fist to supplement his squad's close assault abilities. The Devastator squad with its four heavy weapons and power glove cost 455 points, bringing my running points total to 902 points.

I was torn between another Tactical squad or something a bit more offensive for my third and final squad. Though I was tempted by a Close Assault squad I could foresee it being swallowed up whole by the Orkish horde so in the end I decided on something which could fight at a distance against a far superior number of enemy troops – a Terminator squad. Terminator squads don't come cheap, five Terminators cost

THE BLOOD ANGELS

BROTHER-CAPTAIN ERASMUS TYCHO, BLOOD ANGEL COMMANDER
Power armour, bolt pistol, boltgun, frag grenades.

BLOOD ANGEL TERMINATOR SQUAD

Squad Redemptor

All Terminators equipped with tactical dreadnought armour, targeters, and weapons as noted below.

Sergeant Huon:
Storm bolter, power sword.

3 Marines: Storm bolter, power fist.
1 Marine: Assault cannon, power fist.

1 Rhino APC

BLOOD ANGEL TACTICAL SQUAD

All Space Marines equipped with Mk7 power armour, bolt pistol, frag grenades, and weapons as noted below.

Battle Squad Paulus

Sergeant Paulus:
Boltgun.

3 Marines: Boltgun.
1 Marine: Flamer.

Battle Squad Mephisto

Brother Mephisto:
Boltgun.

3 Marines: Boltgun.
1 Marine: Missile launcher (Targeter, frag and super-krak ammo).

BLOOD ANGEL DEVASTATOR SQUAD

All Space Marines equipped with Mk7 power armour, bolt pistol, frag grenades, and weapons as noted below.

Battle Squad Adorno

Sergeant Adorno:
Power fist, boltgun.

2 Marines: Boltgun.
1 Marine: Heavy plasma gun (with targeter).
1 Marine: Heavy bolter (with targeter).

Battle Squad Ariosto

Brother Ariosto:
Boltgun.

2 Marines: Boltgun.
1 Marine: Lascannon (with targeter).
1 Marine: Missile launcher (Targeter, frag and super-krak ammo).

'FURIOSO' DREADNOUGHT
Multi-melta, power fist and storm bolter.

TOTAL POINTS VALUE: 1522

more than ten ordinary Space Marines – their storm bolters and tactical dreadnought armour make them more than a match for anyone in a shoot-out. The biggest problem with using Terminators is getting them into action quickly – every missed opportunity to fire means all those points you've spent on them are effectively wasted. To ensure a quick, clean deployment of the Terminators I bought them a Rhino APC to drop them right where I wanted them to go. This would free them up on later turns to get into cover insteadoof having to worry about advancing. This trick of using a Rhino to deploy Terminators is something I've learned from Jervis to my cost. The Terminators, Redemptor squad, cost 420 points including the Rhino and an assault cannon as the squad heavy weapon. Added to the running total this brought me to 1322 points, leaving me less than 200 points.

With my squads sorted out, what I really needed to round out my force was some decent support, something that could dish out a lot of damage and survive plenty of fire itself. We've just had one of the monstrous new Space Marine dreadnoughts painted up and I knew it would fulfil both these criteria admirably. The cost for this was another 200 points including the upgrade of one arm to a multi-melta and the addition of a bank of auto-launchers armed with frag grenades. Unfortunately this would take me over my 1500 point limit but Jervis agreed to up the value of his force to compensate.

Thus my force was chosen, though with only one character (and no additional wargear for him!) I was fundamentally lacking in this area. However, in view of the fact that I had a mere twenty five Space Marines to face the Orks with I was unwilling to sacrifice any troops or the dreadnought to gain more characters. Still, I could take solace in the thought that my ordinary Space Marines were as good as Ork Nobz anyway. Jervis had already set up the terrain for the battle so all that remained was to draw our Mission cards randomly and prepare our deployment.

DEPLOYMENT AND MISSION CARDS

I drew the 'Dawn Raid' Mission card, which meant I would have to forge across the battle zone and get either an undamaged vehicle or a squad with less than 50% casualties into Jervis' deployment zone by the end of the game. This would be a tall order indeed! I reckoned that with the dreadnought around to support my advance I could punch through the Orks; the trick would be to avoid any advancing squads being encircled and cut off. Jervis drew 'The Assassins', which meant he would be out to kill or injure Brother-Captain Tycho (and he didn't even have a refractor field to protect him!). This was fortunate for me because the Orks would have been much better off trying to swarm past me on a Dawn Raid of their own or sitting back and gunning me down on an Engage and Destroy mission. At least I could try to keep Brother-Captain Tycho out of harm's way.

The battlefield presented me with some immediate problems. After looking over it for a while I chose the edge with the bunkers and slightly more open layout in its deployment zone. This side of the table seemed to offer good positions for my Devastators and offered a better route through to the opposite edge of the table by using the jungles on my left. The bunkers on the right looked tempting as a good strongpoint to hold but I knew from previous experience that the broad swathe of clear terrain in front of them would offer an ideal place for the Orks to deploy in strength and bring their numbers to bear. Anything placed in the bunkers would die. As Jervis started to deploy his forces I tried to formulate a plan of action.

The bunkers were a deathtrap and anything on the right hand side would have to bear the full brunt of the Orks' numbers. The jungles, on the other hand, were so tightly grouped that numbers would probably be of little benefit in them except if hand-to-hand combat occurred. My dreadnought would obviously be better off in the jungles, sheltered from most of the Orks' heavy weapons by the lush green canopy. The dreadnought would be accompanied by Squad Paulus and Squad Mephisto and this joint assault group would try to blast their way through the jungle to the far side of the ruins and into Jervis' deployment zone.

Squads Ariosto and Adorno would take up positions on the hills or the refinery complex near Paulus and Mephisto to give covering fire. My Terminators would be thrown forward mercilessly onto the open plain on the right to hold up the Orkish scum for as long as possible to prevent them transferring reinforcements to their threatened flank. I would place Brother-Captain Tycho once I had seen Jervis' deployment.

Because of the missions Jervis was forced to deploy his forces right across the table. The Death Skulls and the Bad Moons with their extra heavy weapons held the centre with Gretchin and Evil Sunz out to the right flank. A Nobz mob in a battlewagon was also in the centre, presumably as a mobile reserve. Two large mobs of Goff Orks were positioned in the jungle with an Ork dreadnought in support; Jervis obviously understood the threat from that quarter as well as I did.

The force covering the jungle didn't seem insurmountable though (merely 2 to 1 odds!) so I placed Brother-Captain Tycho in with Squads Paulus and Mephisto and stuck with my original plan. Squad Adorno deployed on the hill to Squad Paulus' right to try and pin down the Goffs and Bad Moons with heavy bolter and plasma fire. Squad Ariosto was positioned on the hill behind my dreadnought to nail the Orks' battlewagon if it moved forward to threaten Squads Paulus and Adorno. Ariosto's missile launcher could also throw some frag into the forces on my right in support of the Terminators. Though there was no cover on the hill itself I reckoned that the Orks would have problems getting near enough to seriously threaten their position.

After much deliberation I placed the Terminators in their Rhino behind the smaller bunker on the right. The Rhino would drop off the Terminators and they would make for the rocks right beneath the guns of the Death Skulls. I felt confident that Squad Redemptor would be able to inflict crippling casualties on the Death Skulls and drive them back before the Terminators withdrew towards the left to deal with the Bad Moons.

To cover myself in case, by bad luck, I didn't get the first turn, I placed Squads Paulus and Mephisto in hiding in the jungle. I tried to place the other squads and the Rhino in positions where they couldn't get hit by the Orks' heavy weapons straight away.

JOHN BLANCHE

CHOOSING THE ORK ARMY

(Jervis Johnson)

We've been playing quite a few games of Warhammer 40,000 at the Studio recently, testing the scenarios included in the new edition of the game to make sure that they are evenly balanced and exciting (they are!). So, when Andy asked me if I'd like to play a slightly larger game to showcase the new edition of Warhammer 40,000, I jumped at the chance. For this battle report we decided to use two 'medium-sized' armies of 1500 points each, and to only use material that you get in the new Warhammer 40,000 game box. This caused me a few problems initially because there were a few models I would normally field in my Ork army that I would not be able to use, so I would have to modify my army for this battle. For example, the rules for Ghazghkull Thraka will be published in the Orks Codex supplement, so I couldn't use him to lead my Orky horde as I normally would.

None the less, there was a wide selection of models I could use, so it was just a question of exactly which models I would take. Fortunately, the new Ork army list is considerably easier to use than the old lists published in 'Ere We Go and Freebooterz, so redesigning my army for this game would be a fairly easy task. Instead of having a separate list for each clan, there is one list that can be used to create any type of Ork army. On the whole, an Ork army created under the old lists will be perfectly legal using the new lists, though some of the points values have changed (generally going down rather than up). After studying the new lists for a short while, I decided that I would take a primarily infantry-based army. To a certain extent this was forced upon me, as the only vehicles I could use were battlewagons and Ork dreadnoughts, and Ioonly have one of each in my army. This didn't worry me overmuch, however, as I knew that Andy's Space Marine army would be fairly small and I felt fairly confident that if I took a large infantry force I could overwhelm him with sheer force of numbers!

One benefit of the new lists for an Ork player concerns the cost of heavy weapons. Obviously a lascannon will be more effective in the hands of Space Marine than a Gretchin, and this is reflected in the new lists by reducing the cost of weapons for armies that do not have a high ballistic skill or which lack targeters. As Ork armies have neither of these, while Space Marines have both, it means that Ork heavy weapons are considerably cheaper that the equivalent Space Marine weapons. In addition, the Orks are no longer hamstrung by Malfunction cards, and so can rely on their heavy weapons and vehicles to last out the entire battle rather than breaking down on the first turn. Because of these two factors I decided to equip my Boyz with as many heavy weapons as I could take.

My first step in picking the army was to choose its Warboss and other character models. As I couldn't take Ghazghkull, I took his right hand man Magrot instead. This Ork Warboss greatly admires Ghazghkull, right down to dressing exactly like him – so I could still use my Ghazghkull model! I next went on to pick the Oddboyz for the army. Oddboyz are still important with the new Ork lists, as you can only take certain types of equipment if you have the appropriate Oddboy. For example, in order to take any dreadnoughts the army must include at least one Painboy, in order to take any battlewagons it must have a Mekaniak, and so on. I decided to take one of each type of Ork Oddboy (a Mekaniak, a Painboy, a Runtherd, and a Weirdboy plus his Minderz), so that I could use any item of equipment I wanted.

Choosing the Boyz mobz for the army proved to be very straightforward, as I simply took every mob that I had! This gave me a five-strong Nobz mob bristling with close combat weapons, five mobs of Orks, and a mob of 20 Gretchin. The Ork mobs carried a total of nine heavy weapons between them! What was more, I still had enough points left over to buy the battlewagon and the Ork dreadnought I mentioned earlier. My army now hadoover 80 models, which I hoped would prove to be enough to overwhelm the 30 or so Space Marines I expected to face.

DEPLOYMENT AND MISSION CARDS

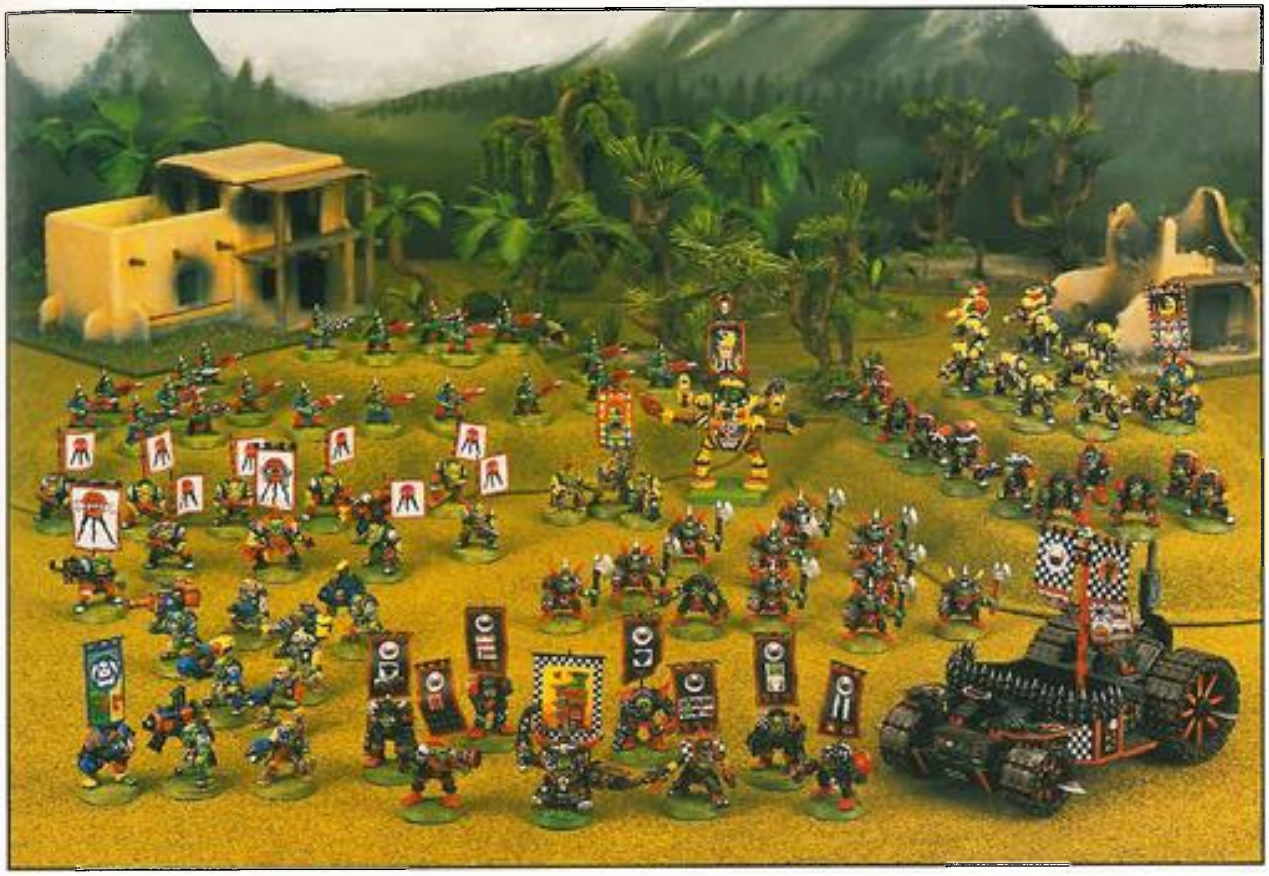
Because Andy had taken a coupleoof days off (inoorder to recover from the effort of getting Warhammer 40,000 finished on time), I set up all of the terrain for the game, which in turn meant that Andy would get to choose which edge of the table he set up on. Because of this it was in my own interests to set up the terrain in as balanced a manner as possible. The new Warhammer 40,000 rulebook includes extensive notes and tips on how to set up the terrain to make an exciting game, but what it boils down to is 'the more terrain, the better the game'. Bearing this in mind I used very nearly all of the Warhammer 40,000 terrain that we have at the Studio. The result is shown on the Deployment map. Note how I tried to make sure that there were adequate 'clumps' of cover on the table, so that troops could hop from one piece of cover to another to close with the enemy rather than make a suicidal charge over open ground.

When Andy returned we were ready to find out what our respective missions were and set up our armies. The new edition of Warhammer 40,000 includes a set of four Mission cards for each side, one of which is dealt at random to each player at the start of the game. The cards describe the objectives that each player must attempt to achieve over the course of the game, and the victory points he will earn if he does achieve them. Both players also receive victory points for destroying enemy models.

At the end of the game the points for any achieved objectives are added to points scored for wiping out enemy models, and the player with the most points is the winner. The Mission cards are not kept secret, so you know what your opponent's mission is, which forces you to try to achieve your own victory conditions while thwarting your opponent's.

For our game I drew 'The Assassins' as my mission, while Andy got 'Dawn Raid'. This meant that my primary objective was to kill Andy's Space Marine commander, while he had to try to get an undamaged vehicle, or a squad with less than 50% casualties, into my set-up zone. The combination of objectives meant that I was going to have to defend my set-up

THE ORK HORDE



WARBOSS MAGROT
Bolt pistol, axe, frag stikkbomz, Ork 'eavy armour, and the following Wargear cards: *Combi-weapon (meltagun & bolter), Refractor field and Bionic eye.*

GOBRUNT (Runtherd)
Bolt pistol, axe and flak armour.

MAD DOC GROTSNIK (Painboy)
Bolt pistol, power fist and flak armour.

DURBAD (Mekboy)
Meltagun, bolt pistol, axe, flak armour and Wargear card *Haywire grenade.*

ODDGIT
Weirdboy (Lvl 2 psyker) Flak armour, copper staff.
2 Minderz: Bolters, frag stikkbomz and flak armour.

NOBZ MOB
Snagrot: Ork 'eavy armour, bolter, frag stikkbomz and power fist.
Muglurk: Ork 'eavy armour, bolter, frag stikkbomz and power fist.
Skumbag: Ork 'eavy armour, bolter, frag stikkbomz and power fist.
Dur-Thug: Flak armour, bolt pistol, chainsword and frag stikkbomz.
Uzgrot: Ork 'eavy armour, plasma gun, frag stikkbomz, bolt pistol & axe.

NAZGUT'S MOB (Goffs)
2 Nobz: Bolt pistol, chain-sword and flak armour.

10 Orks: Bolt pistol, axe, frag stikkbomz and flak armour.

1 ORK DREADNOUGHT
2 Power claws, lascannon and heavy bolter.

NARBOG'S MOB (Goffs)
1 Nob: Bolt pistol, chainsword and flak armour.

8 Orks: Bolt pistol, axe, frag stikkbomz and flak armour.
1 Ork: Heavy plasma gun, bolt pistol, axe, frag stikkbomz and flak armour.

MORGOG'S MOB (Bad Moons)
1 Nob: Bolter, power fist and Ork 'eavy armour.

6 Orks: Bolter and flak armour.
1 Ork: Lascannon, bolter and flak armour.
1 Ork: Autocannon, bolter and flak armour.

GROG'S MOB (Evil Sunz)
1 Nob: Bolt pistol, power fist and flak armour.

7 Orks: Bolter, frag stikkbomz and flak armour.
1 Ork: Multi-melta, bolter, frag stikkbomz and flak armour.

GROTNOB'S MOB (Death Skulls)
1 Nob: Plasma gun, power fist and Ork 'eavy armour.

3 Orks: Bolter, frag stikkbomz and flak armour.
2 Orks: Heavy stubber, bolter, frag stikkbomz and flak armour.
2 Orks: Heavy bolter, bolter, frag stikkbomz and flak armour.
1 Ork: Hvy plasma gun, bolter and flak armour.

20 GRETCHIN:
Autogun and flak armour.

1 ORK BATTLEWAGON

TOTAL POINTS VALUE: 1518

zone, while trying to take-out Andy's commander as the Space Marines attacked. This was going to present me with a few problems, as the Orks tend to be better on the offensive rather than on the defensive. Compounding this problem was the fact that I was going to have to set up first.

In the new Warhammer 40,000 rules all armies are given a strategy rating, and the army that has the lower strategy rating has to set up first. Not surprisingly, the Space Marines have a higher strategy rating than the Orks (5 as opposed to 3), so I would have to set up before Andy. This meant that I was going to have to defend the entire length of the table, as I could be certain that Andy would ruthlessly exploit any weak points I left.

It was now up to Andy to choose which table edge he would set up on and, knowing that I would be on the defensive, he took the bottom edge of the table to deny me the benefit of the fortifications there. Studying the terrain from my half of the table, I quickly realised that Andy would want to attack through the jungle if he could, as dense terrain favours the Space Marines by denying a more numerous opponent the chance to fire with all of his troops. I therefore decided to put my main strength facing the jungle, while holding the other flank with a lighter force, and keeping a reserve of troops in the centre which I could switch to either flank depending on the direction of Andy's attack. I hoped that by putting my strongest units facing the jungle I might scare Andy into attacking across the more open terrain on the other flank.

My actual deployment is shown on the Deployment map. As you can see, the bulk of my troops were set up facing the jungle, including theGGoff mobs, the dreadnought and most of my characters, who excel at close combat and would be at their best in a short range fire-fight in the jungle. The Death Skulls and Evil Sunz, screened by the Gretchin, went on the other flank. The Death Skulls in particular were very heavily armed (five out of nine models carrying heavy weapons!), and I hoped they would be able to lay down a withering hail of fire on this fairly open flank. Finally, the Bad Moons and my Nobz mob went in the centre, with the Nobz being placed in the battlewagon to act as my main reserves.

ODDS & ENDS

Although my deployment was now complete, I still had two tasks to carry out before the game started, so as Andy set up his army I sat down to pick my Wargear cards and choose the psychic powers for my Weirdboy.

Wargear cards are much like the Magic Item cards in Warhammer Fantasy Battle, though not nearly as powerful. The cards include all kinds of special equipment that would not normally be carried by rank and file troops, such as protective field devices and exotic weapons. Each card has a points value, and only a limited number may be taken by each character. Any embattled Ork, Squat or Imperial Guard commanders whose lives have been made a complete misery by opponents using unlimited numbers of Virus grenades will be happy to learn that these weapons can now only be purchased for an army as Wargear cards, which greatly limits both their numbers and effectiveness.

I hadn't actually allocated any points to Wargear cards when I picked my army, but as Andy's army came to 1522 points while mine only came to 1490, we decided that I could spend the 32 points difference on some Wargear cards. What I really wanted from the deck was something to kill Andy's commander, and the obvious choice was a Vortex grenade. Unfortunately, Vortex grenades cost 50 points, which was more than I had to spend.

In the end I decided to take a combi-weapon with a bolter and a meltagun for Magrot, which would give him the firepower to simply blow Andy's commander away if he could get a line of fire. I also took a Haywire grenade for Durbad my Mekaniak, which would prove useful if Andy included any powerful vehicles in his army. These two cards left me with just enough points to buy a refractor field for Magrot for a bit of extra protection, and a bionic eye for my Painboy – Mad Doc Grotsnik because it seemed appropriate! ("been eksperimentin'oon 'imself ain't 'e!").

Thisoonly left picking the psychic powers for my Weirdboy. The new edition of Warhammer 40,000 includes a short section of rules on psychic powers, which will be expanded in in future supplements and will include special rules for all of the different types of psyker found in the Warhammer 40,000 universe. For this battle, however, I simply had to choose two powers for my Weirdboy from the list in the rulebook. One of these powers can only be used by Ork Weirdboyz – the appropriately named 'Power Vomit' – so I really had to take this. The other power I chose was 'Destroy Mind', which I hoped I could use to fry the brain of Andy's commander.

DEPLOYMENT MAP

BLOOD ANGELS TURN ONE

In the new Warhammer 40,000, you use a slightly different procedure to determine who has the first turn. Each player rolls a D6 and adds their army's strategy rating to the score: whoever gets the highest total has the first turn. Space Marines have a strategy rating of 5 against the Orks' strategy rating of 3. I rolled a 3 against Jervis' roll of 4 for a total of 8 against Jervis' 7 – just giving me the first turn.

BLOOD ANGELS TURN 1

I started off by sending the dreadnought Furioso forward to the edge of the ruins to get a clear shot at the Ork dreadnought. Armed with a lascannon and a heavy bolter, the Ork dreadnought posed the biggest threat to my forces on this flank, so it was imperative that I crippled it quickly. Squads Paulus and Mephisto both ran forward, somewhat impeded by the jungle, and took cover near Furioso, ready to give covering fire if the Orks tried to move within grenade range of my dreadnought.

After examining the potential targets for Squad Ariosto (and hardly finding any!) I placed them into overwatch to cover against the battlewagon and potentially impede the Goffs' progress. The bolter-armed members of Squad Adorno took up positions on the rocky slope before them while the heavy bolter and the heavy plasma gun ranged in on the Death Skulls and Goffs respectively.

Finally the Rhino sped forward and disgorged its heavily armoured contents beneath the noses of the surprised-looking Death Skulls. Unfortunately the Terminators could not quite make it into the cover of the rocks they were heading for and were left more than a little exposed.

Furioso's multi-melta spat a roaring blast of power at the Ork dreadnought. Caught in an expanding cloud of super-heated energy the Ork machine staggered and started to visibly melt. Rivers of molten slag ran down its hull as it stumbled back and collapsed on top of the Painboy behind it, seeming to seek a last embrace from its creator before it was destroyed. A rousing cheer went up from the advancing Space Marines. Furioso's shot in fact penetrated and damaged every hit location on the Ork dreadnought, my only regret was that the thing didn't blow up and take some Goffs with it! A salvo of explosive bolts from Furioso's storm bolter was less accurate, merely carving a swathe through the jungle ahead.

Squad Adorno opened fire in unison with the fall of the Ork dreadnought. The heavy plasma gunner firedoon low power into Narbog's mob, engulfing the Orks' own heavy plasma gunner and another Goff in boiling plasma. Robbed of both their heavy plasma gun and their dreadnought on the left flank the Orks would now be hard put to even damage Furioso.

After this stunning start the Blood Angels' firing went utterly to pieces. Squad Adorno's heavy bolter missed and the Terminators suffered a complete aberration by completely missing the Death Skulls, despite only needing 2 or more on a D6 to hit! They actually rolled four 1's and theoone Brother Marine who rolled a hit managed to jam his storm bolter! This unbelievable disaster, combined with their failure to reach the cover of the rocks, left Redemptor squad in deep, deep trouble. Obviously the Death Skulls' habit of painting themselves blue for luck had paid off...!

As an ominous epitaph to this turn the Ork's Weirdboy tried to use his *Destroy Mind* power on Brother-Captain Tycho. The Weirdboy failed to summon the energy required but I had a nasty premonition that he wasn't going to stop trying.

VICTORY POINTS

BLOOD ANGELS 2 POINTS
ORKS 0 POINTS

THE TERMINATORS OF REDEMPTOR SQUAD DEPLOY AMONGST THE ROCKS.

ORKS TURN ONE

One of the few advantages of moving second is that it allows you to decide on your plan of action after your opponent has made his first move and committed his troops. As I suspected he would, Andy launched his attack through the jungle. Fortunately for me, although the Space Marine dreadnought vaped my dreadnought (and took out my Painboy to boot!), the rest of Andy's attacks were largely ineffectual and the bulk of my forces were unharmed. This meant that I still had plenty of troops to try to counter Andy's plan. I quickly decided to attempt to blow away his Terminators with massed firepower, but to hold back on the other flank against Andy's main attack. With a bit of luck I could deal with the Terminators in a couple of turns, which would release my Death Skulls and Bad Moons to support the Goffs.

To this end I moved the Goffs and my Weirdboyz so that the bulk of the Boyz were under cover. The Goffs simply didn't carry the heavy weapons required to enter a long range firefight with the Space Marines, so I hoped to minimise my losses by keeping most of my troops out of harm's way until the Space Marines got closer. I made sure that the Weirdboy in particular was well hidden, as he had the added advantage of not needing a line of sight to use his psychic powers. Unfortunately my Boyz mobs were so large that I couldn't get

ORKS TURN 1.

them all behind cover and maintain squad coherency, so a few had to be left out in the open. However, the Boyz in the open could fire at the Space Marines, and managed to pick off Squad Mephisto's missile launcher with a lucky long range shot.

The battlewagon moved up to support the Goffs, the Nobz leaping out in order to attack Squad Adorno on the hill. As they did so Squad Ariosto, which was onooverwatch to guard against just such a move, opened fire with its lascannon. Fortunately for me, the shot hit a passenger rather than the vehicle itself and then, to add insult to injury, Andy failed to kill the passenger that he had hit! The rest of Squad Ariosto's bolter fire proved equally ineffective. Having survived this wild fusillade of shots the Nobz dismounted, but no doubt still distracted by their lucky escape, failed to hit anything when they fired at Squad Adorno.

Meanwhile my other troops started to tighten the noose on Andy's Terminators: the Bad Moons closed in on one flank, the Gretchin and Evil Sunz swung round the other flank, while the Death Skulls engaged them from the front. Caught in the open the Terminators were attacked by an absolute hail of fire, being hit numerous times!

However, Terminator armour has been greatly improved under the new rules and now offers a 3+ saving roll on two dice, rather than on a single dice as before. As all of the attacks that hit only had saving throw modifiers of -1 or -2, Andy only had to roll a 4 or 5 on 2D6 in order to make his saving roll! Not surprisingly, most of my attacks pinged off the Terminators' armour. However, the sheer number of hits meant that two attacks did get through, killing two of the Terminators before they had managed to kill any of my Orks.

As the Death Skulls broke into a rousing chorus of "two-nil, two-nil, two-nil, two-nil", the Weirdboy turned his *Destroy Mind* power on the Space Marine commander. This time he succeeded in using the power (he needed to roll a 4+ on 1D6 in order to do so). This meant Andy had to make a Ld test for the commander; if he failed the roll the commander would be killed. Andy wasn't too worried about this as his commander had a Ldoof 10, and then promptly managed to roll an 11 on the two dice!

With an agonised groan (echoed by Andy himself), the Space Marine commander fell to the ground, as dead as a doornail. This meant that any Space Marines within 12" had to take a Ld test to see if they were shaken by the loss of their commander. Fortunately for Andy he made all of the rolls. None the less I had achieved my objective! If I could just stop Andy achieving his objective and keep my own casualties down, then the game would be in the bag.

VICTORY POINTS

BLOOD ANGELS 2 POINTS
ORKS 6 POINTS

BLOOD ANGELS TURN TWO

Things were looking very bad at the start of Turn 2. Brother-Captain Tycho was down along with two Terminators from Squad Redemptor (including the one armed with an assault cannon) and Squad Mephisto's missile launcher Marine. Oh why didn't I bring an Apothecary? To add insult to injury Squad Ariosto had lost its missile launcher to a catastrophic malfunction! I tried to console myself with the thought that a good turn of firing could rectify matters, trying not to think about the consequences if it didn't.

I was most concerned about the Goffs and Nobz flanking Squad Paulus, not to mention the battlewagon which could do immense harm by overrunning Squads Ariosto and Adorno.

To stand a chance of staying in the game I had to get a squad or the dreadnought into Jervis' deployment zone and earn the extra victory points I needed. This meant that the dreadnought and Squads Paulus and Mephisto had to keep pushing forward, ignoring the threat to their flank and trying to smash Nazgut's mob directly in their path. I hoped that Squad Adorno could shoot up the Nobz by using rapid fire with their bolters. Unfortunately Nargob's Goff mob was out of sight behind the jungle so there was little I could do about them, instead I took the opportunity to move the heavy plasma gun to a different position with a better field of fire. I left Adorno's heavy bolter covering the right in case the Nobz flanked me that way and to support the beleaguered Terminators.

BLOOD ANGELS TURN 2.

The Terminators were going to have to concentrate on staying alive from here on in so Sergeant Huon led his remaining two Terminators into the cover of the rocks, working his way to the left. The Rhino was more problematic. I could send it rampaging into the Gretchin on the far right and it might kill a few, but it would undoubtedly be destroyed by the Evil Sunz' multi-melta almost immediately. Instead I decided to send it to the left, hoping that I could ram the battlewagon and cripple it. In the event I couldn't actually reach the battlewagon without moving at fast speed, which meant I couldn't turn far enough to make it either. In the end I had to compromise by moving the Rhino half way and hoping that Jervis wouldn't be able to resist ramming me instead.

After some further deliberation I decided to place Squad Ariosto into overwatch again to catch the Nobz and the battlewagon as they moved. If the lascannon could cripple the Orks' battlewagon I might still be in with a sniff of pushing the Rhino further forward and giving Jervis something extra to worry about.

My firing started off badly again. Squad Adorno poured bolter fire into the Nobz mob and scored several hits. Only a single bolter shell hit squarely enough to wound, but ricocheted off the Nob's 'eavy armour. Likewise, the Rhino's twin bolters were accurate but failed to bring down any of these super-Orks. Squad Paulus scored several hits on the exposed Goff mob but failed to wound anyone. The Terminators also had little joy, killing a single miserable Gretchin with their storm bolter fire.

This debacle just goes to prove what a big difference there is between shooting up opponents with a Toughness of 3 as opposed to 4. The Orks could shrug off hits which would have dropped Eldar in their tracks so my bolter fire was getting me nowhere fast; in fact only Squad Mephisto killed a single Goff with bolter fire during the whole of Turn 2. By this time the battlefield was resounding with the sound of my grinding teeth and sulphurous curses at the state of my dice-rolling!

Dreadnought Furioso and Squad Adorno's heavy bolter rescued the situation somewhat. The heavy bolter riddled three Bad Moons (including one armed with an autocannon) and Furioso unleashed its devastating multi-melta upon Nazgut's mob, vapourising three of them instantly and sending the rest fleeing for their very lives in spite of the presence of their Warboss nearby.

However these events were mere bright sparks in an otherwise gloomy turn for me, I had made back some of the victory points lost when the Weirdboy took down Brother-Captain Tycho, but I was still badly lagging. By the end of the turn, I was feeling completely doomed and utterly dogged by bad luck. I fled in search of a cup of coffee to calm my ravaged nerves and hopefully give me a fresh perspective on the situation.

VICTORY POINTS

BLOOD ANGELS 4 POINTS
ORKS 6 POINTS

THE FURIOSO DREADNOUGHT ADVANCES ON NAZGUT'S GOFF MOB.

ORKS TURN TWO

Although Andy's second turn of fire inflicted fewer casualties than I could possibly have hoped for, the fact that he broke Nazgut's mob's morale was extremely annoying. I had been hoping to attack Squad Paulus with the massed fire of both Goff mobs, as you really need to fire as many Ork bolters as possible if you want to cause significant casualties, especially against tough targets like Space Marines. With half of the Goffs scampering for cover, the chance of my causing much damage was severely reduced. What made this all the more galling was the fact that Magrot was within 12" of the mob, so they only had to roll a 9 or less in order not to break.

ORKS TURN 2.

This wasn't the end of my problems either. Andy's Rhino was threatening to overrun my Goff Nobz, and the Space Marine dreadnought (which caused the casualties that routed the Goffs) was going to have to be dealt with somehow, otherwise it would simply roll up my flank. Unfortunately, the Mekaniak armed with the Haywire grenade – a highly effective weapon against dreadnoughts – was in the battlewagon heading in entirely the wrong direction!

After a couple of minutes pondering, I finally decided to jump the Mekaniak out of the battlewagon so that he could run back and deal with the dreadnought, while the battlewagon zoomed off in the other direction to ram the Rhino. This was a little bit risky as the battlewagon was going so fast that the Mekaniak might hurt himself as he leapt out. Fortunately he managed it without a hitch, and scampered back to join Magrot. The battlewagon roared off, smashing into the Rhino and wrecking it. The Rhino would move out of control for a turn and then grind to a halt, effectively destroyed. The battlewagon suffered only minor damage to one of its wheels, reducing it to a maximum move of 8" per turn for the rest of the battle but leaving it otherwise intact.

Meanwhile Nargob's mob advanced through the jungle, firing at Squad Paulus as it did so. As I had feared, however, the combination of poor Orky Ballistic Skill, combined with the Space Marines' superior Toughness resulted in the Goffs failing to inflict a single casualty. The Nobz mob continued to attack Squad Adorno, peppering it with bolter shots and frag grenades. Even though I managed to inflict a number of wounds, Andy made all of his saving rolls and not a single Space Marine was killed. On the other flank the rest of my Orks closed in on the embattled Terminators, and once again unleashed a hail of fire. This time, however, the Terminators were in the cover of the rocks, which meant that most of the Orks' attacks missed. The few shots that did hit bounced off the Terminators' formidable armour.

The final trick up my sleeve was for my Weirdboy to attack the pilot of the Space Marine dreadnought with his *Destroy Mind* power. As the pilot had a Ld value of 10 I had as good a chance of killing him as the Space Marine commander. Unfortunately my run of bad luck continued and the Weirdboy failed to get the power to work. All that was left to do was to try to rally Nazgut's mob, and fortunately I did manage to pull that off. This finished off what had been a terrible turn for the Orks. The only damage I had inflicted on the Space Marines was to take out their Rhino (though at least this earned me a victory point). Unless I was very careful the Space Marines were going to get back into the game.

VICTORY POINTS

BLOOD ANGELS 2 POINTS
ORKS 7 POINTS

BLOOD ANGELS TURN THREE

I was heartened somewhat by caffeine and the Orks' apparent inability to harm me in the previous turn. I put this down to the simple fact that not only did my Blood Angels have a sturdy Toughness of 4 but also an excellent armour saving throw (3 or more on a D6). Also, once the Space Marines were in cover the Orks had tremendous problems even scoring a hit in the first place. The best example of this was the Terminators of Squad Redemptor who had suffered about fifteen hits and lost two of their number while in the open on Turn 1. Once in the cover of the rocks they only suffered a few hits on Turn 2, all of which either failed to wound or were stopped by their tactical dreadnought armour.

My move started with the wrecked Rhino careering out of control into the nearby hillside, which did at least provide Squad Adorno with some cover from the Bad Moons. After this I considered what to do with Squad Redemptor. I was tempted to leave them stationary and rapid fire into the approaching tide of Gretchin or the Bad Moons. However, this would have achieved little in helping out my attack on the left flank and would probably have doomed the squad to losing one or two members to the Evil Sunz' multi-melta during the Orks' turn.

In the end I decided to charge the Terminators at the Ork battlewagon. This may seem a bizarre move but it would actually achieve several things. Firstly it would take Squad Redemptor further out of the clutches of the approaching Gretchin and Evil Sunz (who were obviously not going to get a look in on the battle except by killing the Terminators). Secondly it actually moved the squad a double move towards the main area of the fighting, and thirdly it gave them a chance to earn me an extra victory point by immobilizing the battlewagon as it had only been slightly damaged by ramming the Rhino.

Time was running out for my assault force. Squads Paulus and Mephisto were unable to reach the Orks' deployment zone in time and the Rhino was disabled. This left only the dreadnought and I was acutely aware of the fact that Jervis knew this too. I decided to try and blast my way forward and get the dreadnought into a position where it could charge or run in next turn with covering fire from my other squads.

Squad Mephisto ran forward to be in position for the next turn and to try and lure out Nazgut's mob who were lurking behind the rock spires. Furioso stamped around the corner of the ruins to spot the cowering Weirdboy and his Minderz hiding behind them. Squad Paulus advanced to close range to try and purge the Goffs from the jungle on their right. Squads Adorno and Ariosto maintained their positions to give covering fire.

I directed Squad Ariosto's fire against the Nobz to try and drive them away from Adorno's position, freeing them to support Squad Paulus. However, despite having nine shots I only succeeded in hitting and killing one Nob. A feeling of dark despair swept over me – were those Nobz blessed by Gork and Mork or what? A further six bolter shots from Squad Ariosto pattered off them like summer rain and my screams of frustration echoed out yet again! Denuded of any assistance from Squad Ariosto, Squad Paulus would be in for a good

BLOOD ANGELS TURN 3.

kicking from the Goffs any minute now. Things picked up momentarily when Squad Ariosto's heavy plasma gunner avenged Brother-Captain Tycho's death by blasting Oddgit and one of his Minderz into tiny incandescent particles after the dreadnought had reported their position. However I was soon chewing the table edge with more frustration as their heavy bolter managed to roll two jams and junk itself for the rest of the game!

Furioso was in the tricky situation of having just a single Minder still before him and beyond that the supremely tempting target of the Ork Warboss and a large cluster of Goffs. Unfortunately the Minder hadn't fled when his compatriots were vaped as I'd hoped (too stupid to be scared, I guess). According to the rules I couldn't target the Goffs and the Warboss instead of the Minder. I tried blowing away this impediment with Furioso's storm bolter; it jammed. I tried using Furioso's auto-launchers on him; only one frag grenade hit and that failed to wound. Cursing vehemently I finally blasted the annoying little ***** with the dreadnought's multi-melta and had the satisfaction of seeing him dissolve into a pile of goo. This left Squad Paulus having to deal with twice their number of Goffs ensconced in a jungle completely on their own (doomed, doomed, I hear you cry).

Squad Paulus' firing got off to a rousing start with their flamer burning up two Goffs and setting a third alight. The staccato bark of the squad's bolters rose above the crackling roar as one Goff after another burst under the rain of explosive shells. It was as if all the bad luck that had dogged me through the game was swept away as the laws of probability snapped back into place like an overstretched rubber band. All four bolter-armed members of Squad Paulus slew a Goff each, breaking the Mob's morale and sending Magrot and the bloodied remnants of the Nargob's mob diving for cover in the jungle.

Sadly Squad Redemptor's close assault on the battlewagon yielded no reward, as I failed to immobilize it despite one of the Brother Marines successfully damaging one of its wheels with his power fist. Jervis rallying Nazgut's mob hiding behind the rocks had driven my victory points total right down but breaking the other Goff mob and killing the Weirdboy had dragged me back up again. The vague possibility of victory hove back into view.

VICTORY POINTS

BLOOD ANGELS 5 POINTS
ORKS 7 POINTS

THE BATTLEWAGON CRASHES INTO THE RHINO SENDING IT SPINNING OUT OF CONTROL.

ORK TURN THREE

ORK TURN 3.

Ouch! Well there was no doubt about it, Andy's last turn put the Space Marines back in the game with a vengeance. By more or less destroying my second Goff mob, Andy had left me with very little to slow up his advance. The Goffs I rallied last turn were simply going to have to stay where they were, so that if Andy ran into my set-up zone I would at least have some troops to engage him with in my last turn. For similar reasons my Warboss and Mekaniak had to remain under cover, so that if Andy advanced his dreadnought on the final turn I would have something to attack it with.

In fact the only unit I could attack with on this flank was my Nobz mob. As their fire on previous turns had been largely ineffective I decided to charge them into hand-to-hand combat this turn. Two of the Nobz charged Andy's Terminator Sergeant, as I only needed to inflict one more casualty to reduce the Terminators to half strength, and this would earn me a victory point. The other two Nobz headed off in the opposite direction to attack Squad Paulus and hopefully slow up Andy's advance towards my set-up zone. Squads that are engaged in close combat do not have to worry about the Squad Coherency rules, which is why the Nobz could attack in two directions at once. However, whichever group was smaller in my next turn would count as having broken morale until I got the two halves of the mob back together again. As I doubted that the Nobz would survive through Andy's turn, I didn't forsee this being a problem. The Orks' battlewagon hurriedly backed away from the attacking Terminators, leaving room for the Nobz to attack the Terminator Sergeant.

On my other flank the Gretchin and Evil Sunz chased after the Terminators, who had moved out of range again when they attacked the battlewagon. The Bad Moons carried on with their advance, while the Death Skulls stayed put and switched their attention to Squads Ariosto and Adorno, which they could just see on the other side of the table. Unfortunately the Orks' fire proved every bit as ineffective as it had last turn, and not a single Space Marine was killed by Ork shooting. The Nobz were more effective in hand-to-hand combat, killing the flamer Marine from Squad Paulus and the Terminator Sergeant, although the Sergeant did manage to kill one of the Nobz before he went down himself.

As we went into the final two turns things were very finely balanced. Andy could still achieve his objective by running his dreadnought into my set-up zone, or might even be able to inflict enough casualties to give him a win even without achieving his objective. However, I was still fairly confident. I was three points ahead of Andy's victory point total, so he would need to get a lot of kills to score enough victory points with casualties alone, while my Warboss and Mekaniak were in a position to damage or destroy the Space Marine dreadnought if it moved into my set-up zone. None the less, everything would rest on the outcome of Andy's final turn...

VICTORY POINTS

BLOOD ANGELS 5 POINTS
ORKS 8 POINTS

BLOOD ANGELS TURN FOUR

BLOOD ANGELS TURN 4.

With a sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach I realised I couldn't get my dreadnought into Jervis' deployment zone and score a big fat five victory points. The reason was that I couldn't move far enough forward with a normal move. I couldn't make a run move because of the proximity of the hidden Goffs behind the rocks nor could I make a charge against them because they were out of sight. By keeping those cursed Goffs hidden Jervis had stymied me! All I could do now was dig my heels in and try to inflict as many casualties as possible. The Bad Moons were already weakened by Squad Adorno's heavy bolter fire so I decided to try and break them; my other targets would be the Ork Warboss and the Nobz mob. If I could take out all these targets and not suffer too many casualties myself I could hopefully just sneak ahead in the victory points.

Squads Paulus and Mephisto froze into overwatch to cover the Nobz attacking from the right and to remain alert in case the Goffs emerged from behind the rocks. An Ork Mekboy was also lurking around behind the jungle and I got a nasty

THE ORK NOBZ ENGAGE THE TERMINATOR SERGEANT AS THE EVIL SUNZ ADVANCE.

impression he was trying to sidle up to the dreadnought – doubtless he had something to use against it up his sleeve. I decided to keep a special eye on him.

My dreadnought stomped towards the smoking crater where the Weirdboy had been and levelled its multi-melta at the recently rallied Ork Warboss – the greenskin was desperately trying to hide amongst the trees but the tell-tale glow of his refractor field gave him away. The two survivors of Squad Redemptor held their position among the spiker plants and readied their storm bolters. Squads Adorno and Ariosto advanced from their hillside positions, one Marine from Squad Adorno clambering up onto the exposed hill crest to get a shot at the Mekboy.

Furioso spat its hissing, roaring bolt of super-heat for the last time, shrivelling the Warboss instantly and sending bright flames leaping through the edge of the jungle to kill another cowering Goff nearby. A bright lance of destruction from Ariosto's lascannon blew apart a Bad Moon as Squad Adorno opened fire. Incandesent plasma fire vapourised another Bad Moon and the Brother Marine on the crest of the hill plugged the Mekboy with a single bolter shot. Squad Redemptor cut down yet another Bad Moon and the Bad Moons' Nob barely survived the hail of fire thanks to his 'eavy armour but his continued survival prevented the surviving Bad Moons breaking and running. The Nob which had killed Sergeant Huon was thoroughly riddled with explosive bolts and died very messily. This left only the two Nobz facing Squads Paulus and Mephisto. Sadly these didn't break but they were still in the unenviable position of being covered by eight overwatching Space Marines...

At the end of the turn Squad Redemptor rallied from their shaken morale status which would make it much harder for Jervis to dispose of them. This turn only brought me back up to level pegging on the victory points, 8 all, But if I could just kill or break those two surviving Nobz and not lose any victory points myself I could still win!

VICTORY POINTS

BLOOD ANGELS 8 POINTS
ORKS 8 POINTS

ORK TURN 4

Well, the Space Marines finally showed what they could do, earning Andy three victory points with some very accurate shooting in his turn and evening up our scores. Even so, as I started my last turn, I knew that all I needed was one victory point to get a win. If I still had either my Warboss with his combi-weapon or (even better!) the Mekaniak with his Haywire grenade, then I would have had a good chance of inflicting some damage on the Space Marine's dreadnought and earning a victory point that way, but as both characters were now dead this was not to be.

This left me with the rather slim chance of finishing off the two remaining Terminators with the massed fire of the Evil Sunz and Bad Moons, combined with the equally slim chance of my two remaining Nobz being able to kill the three Space Marines from Squad Paulus, reducing the squad to less than half strength. Achieving either of these tasks would earn me a victory point and win me the game.

Then disaster struck! Before I had even moved a single model, Andy declared that Squad Paulus would fire on my two remaining Nobz. Andy had placed the squad on overwatch to provide covering fire for his dreadnought, in case he didn't manage to kill my Warboss and Mekaniak in his turn. As both were dead there was no reason for Andy not to fire straight away, and that is exactly what he did, killing the two remaining Nobz with a hail of bolter fire. Not only did this eliminate any chance of reducing Squad Paulus to half strength, but it also earned Andy another victory point, which put him in the lead!

My only chance now of stopping the Space Marines winning the game was to wipe out the two remaining Terminators. I couldn't get a line of sight to enough Space Marines to reduce any of the other squads to half strength, and I didn't have a line of sight to the dreadnought with any weapons that could harm it. Unfortunately, only my Bad Moons and Evil Sunz could still see the Terminators, but they blasted away at them with every weapon they had. The Bad Moons fired first and

ORK TURN 4.

managed to take out one of the Terminators with a lucky hit from their lascannon, which left just one last Terminator for the Sunz to finish off. The Evil Sunz let rip, but their multi-melta shot missed completely, and their bolter fire pinged off the Terminator's awesomely thick armour. There was nobody left to shoot at the Terminators – Andy had managed to pull off a win in the very last turn of the game, and almost on the very last roll of the dice!

The game drew to a close with the Death Skulls blasting away at the only target they could see, the Space Marine from Squad Adorno who had moved into the open so that he could kill my Mekaniak, and who now paid for his daring by being riddled with heavy bolter fire. Still, this was small consolation. Victory had been in my grasp for most of the battle, only to be torn away on the very final turn of the game.

VICTORY POINTS

BLOOD ANGELS 9 POINTS
ORKS 8 POINTS

BLOOD ANGELS DEBRIEFING (Andy Chambers)

Made it! It was a very tight game and I really did think I was doomed by the end of Turn 2. Everything that could go wrong had gone wrong and I was ready to throw in the proverbial towel, which just goes to show it ain't over 'till it's over! However, my strategy of pushing through the jungle rather than across the plain paid off handsomely. This was because the Orks were unable to capitalise on my failures and had to come at me piecemeal because of the dense terrain. I did fail to achieve my primary objective and only pulled a minimal victory out of the bag by killing an awful lot of Orks.

Jervis reckoned it was a mistake to send in the Terminators against the Ork horde on the plain, maintaining that they would have given me the extra edge I needed to break through on the left. I think he's right: Squads Paulus and Mephisto spent too much time shooting Orks and not enough time running forward. Choosing an Assault squad with or without jump packs would have made my mission an awful lot easier but I didn't know that I would be playing a Dawn Raid mission when I chose my force. On the other hand, if I had taken an Assault squad and then got Engage and Destroy instead I would have been struggling.

Though some Terminators advancing through the ruins on the left would have made my assault a lot easier I feel that the role that Squad Redemptor performed was quite vital. If I had deployed nothing beneath the maw of Jervis' guns in the centre the Bad Moons and the Death Skulls would have folded in on my right flank and destroyed Squads Adorno and Ariosto quite quickly, leaving my other squads doing a Custer's last stand in the ruins. Only Terminators could have survived in that position and remained a thorn in Jervis' side throughout the game. If I had, for example, deployed Squad Ariosto in one of the bunkers (as I did consider for a while) I guarantee they would have been turned into dogmeat by the end of Turn 2.

The biggest problem in trying to move forward was the presence of the Goffs hidden behind the rocks. Jervis had the good sense to realise that they could do a far better job of keeping me at bay by staying out of sight and not getting shot. As it was I couldn't risk sending Squad Mephisto too close because the Goffs would have easily wiped them out in close combat and the dreadnought was also stymied by their presence.

Of course my "man of the match" award has to go to the dreadnought – without him propping up my left so comprehensively things would have been very dire indeed. The dreadnought was ideally suited to fighting in the close confines of the left hand side of the table, equipped as it was with the devastating but short-ranged multi-melta – my only regret was that it didn't get into hand-to-hand combat and use its power fist. However, I do suspect its presence put Jervis off any thoughts of throwing his Warboss and the Goffs into hand-to-hand combat with Squad Paulus.

Probably the most disappointing showing on my side was from the Devastator squad. They suffered the worst of my bad luck but I definitely fixated too much on Squad Ariosto maintaining their position. Once their missile launcher had malfunctioned and I had failed to damage the battlewagon with the lascannon I should have moved them down to get involved with the fight around the ruins.

Squad Adorno did a fine job, though they spent far too long trying to dispose of the Nobz because they could only bring bolters to bear on them. The moral of this story is not to be afraid to miss a shot with your heavy weapons so that they can move to a better position. Though it seems unthinkable at the the time, your opponent will simply out-manoeuvre you if you stay in the same place for too long. I think placing two heavy weapons in each squad was worthwhile because there weren't enough positions to deploy all four heavy weapons together effectively.

Poor Brother-Captain Erasmus Tycho suffered the worst luck of all, failing a 2D6 roll when all he needed to score was a 10 or less. The Apothecaries assure me that with extensive psycho-surgery he will fight again but in this game his loss was devastating. Not only did Jervis get a big fat six victory points (75% of the Orks' victory points) for taking him out but the Break test his loss caused on all the squads within 12" could have been disastrous. Perhaps I should have just hidden him well out of the way once I knew what Jervis' mission was, but I couldn't bring myself to do it, it just wouldn't have been heroic…!

Looking at Jervis' plan and deployment I can find little fault except in positioning the Evil Sunz on the extreme right – their multi-melta would have been a lot more useful in the jungles on the left. During the game he didn't respond quickly enough to the attack on the left, getting hung up on trying to destroy the Terminators for too long while the Goffs and Nobz were gradually pummelled to death.

It must be said that Jervis was exceedingly lucky to kill my commander with the Weirdboy – if he hadn't, the battle would have been an utter trouncing for him. On the other hand, I was lucky to pull it back and kill enough Orks to win in spite of failing to fulfil my primary objective. A stunning testimony to the durability of a Space Marine force at close quarters in dense terrain.

THE BENEFITS OF HINDSIGHT (Jervis Johnson)

And yet again Andy pulls off a spectacular last minute win – will I ever beat this man (in print at least)? Still, I'm not too upset about losing the game. After all it was very close, and I did a lot better than the last time I led my Orks against Andy's Space Marines (see WD 158 for a report of that battle).

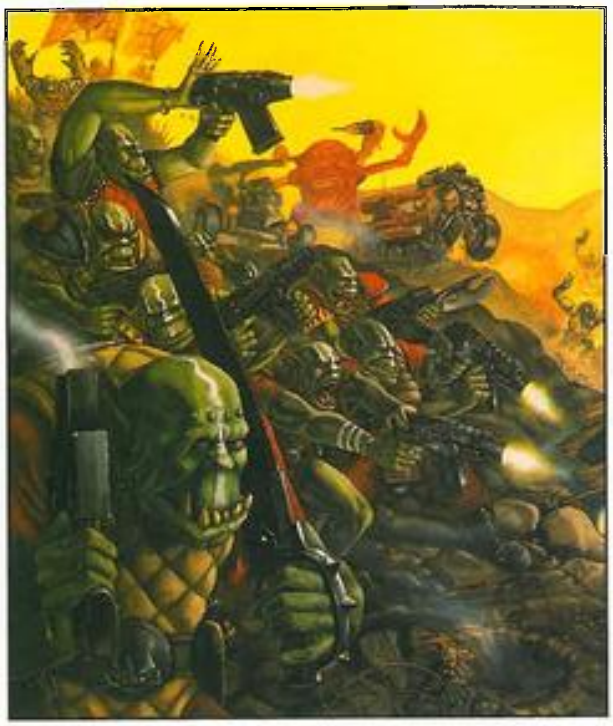
So what went wrong? On the whole my set-up wasn't too bad, though possibly I should have placed even more troops opposite the jungle than I actually did. Certainly the Evil Sunz would have been of more use in the jungle than they were on the other flank. On the other hand, if I hadn't placed the Evil Sunz where I did then Andy could have easily moved round and enveloped the open flank in his Rhino, which is part of the reason why I placed the Evil Sunz and their multi-melta where I did. Possibly the best compromise would have been to place the Evil Sunz in the centre as part of my 'mobile reserve', so that they could have been switched to either flank as needed. Ah well, such are the benefits of hindsight.

My other error when setting up was to leave the Ork dreadnought in a position where Andy could get a shot at it in his first turn. I must admit that I had assumed that the jungle would block any line of sight Andy might get to the dreadnought, but I was wrong, and paid dearly for my mistake. Still, at least the battle taught me that the new rules for setting up mean that you must be extra careful when you have to set up first, as a cunning opponent will punish any mistakes that you make.

During the game my biggest error was committing too many of my troops to trying to wipe out the Terminators. In particular, I really should have moved the Bad Moons over to defend against the main Space Marine attack through the jungle, rather than using them against the Terminators. This mistake was compounded by my zooming the Nobz mob forward in the battlewagon on the first turn. It was only bad luck on Andy's part that stopped the Nobz being wiped out on the first or second turn, and in any case they would have been much more useful nearer my base line acting as a reserve force. As most of them were armed with power fists they could have even damaged Andy's dreadnought in close combat, which might have won me the game.

And last but not least, advancing the Goff mob through the jungle to engage Squad Paulus on Turn 2 probably wasn't that good an idea either. My Boyz didn't manage to kill a single Space Marine, and were all but wiped out by the return fire, earning Andy two victory points and leaving me with almost no troops to defend against his main attack. If I had thought about it a bit harder at the time I probably wouldn't have made the move, because the other Goff mob had already been driven off, and I should have realised that ten Orks are going to get badly mauled by an equal number of Space Marines. But I had decided on my plan of action during my first turn, and rather than revising it in the face of the situation I faced at the start of Turn 2, I carried on blindly with my plan without thinking it through.

Still, it wasn't all bad news. I was more than pleased with the performance of my Weirdboy, and keeping him well hidden for as long as possible so that he could attack without suffering any return fire proved very successful. I'll remember that tactic



in any future games. I learnt my lesson on Turn 2, and kept my other Goff mob well under cover where they acted as a threat to Andy's troops and stopped him getting any troops into my deployment zone. It just goes to show that you don't have to bring any guns to bear to have an effect on a battle.

Turning my attention to the Space Marines' tactics, there are only a couple of points I would make. Although Andy disagrees, I feel that using the Terminators to try to hold up my troops on the left flank was a bad move and nearly resulted in their being wiped out. The job could have been done just as well by one of the Space Marine Devastator squads, and I'm sure that the Terminators would have proved a lot more effective in the jungle terrain on my right flank than out in the open facing the massed fire of almost half the Ork army. Andy's other mistake was letting my Weirdboy get in range of his commander, and right from the very first turn as well! My Weirdboy had almost a 10% chanceoof killing the commander each and every time he attacked, and while odds like that aren't all that good, they quickly add up over the course of a few turns. As it was I lucked out and killed the commander very early on, and the victory points I earned almost gave me the game. Almost...almost...

But turning aside from game winning tactics and feeble excuses, I do feel that this game served to highlight the benefits of someoof the changes Andy and Rick have made in the Warhammer 40,000 game system. The actual game mechanics have been streamlined to make Warhammer 40,000 battles faster and more enjoyable. The new Wargear cards are also worth a mention, and the new army lists are both easier to use and much more evenly balanced than they were before. But probably the most important changes of all are the new Mission cards and victory conditions, which serve to give a sense of purpose to each game, and greatly add to the excitement level of any battle. All in all then, the new rules make for a faster, more even, and more exciting game. And you can't ask for much more than that!

BRIDGE OF DEATH

By Jake Thornton & Adrian Wood

This month's battle report is a bitter struggle between Space Marines and Orks. The game was based on one of the Battle for Armageddon scenarios from the new Warhammer 40,000 boxed set.

The Orks were surrounded. Warlord Ghazghkull Thraka, Overboss of all the Goffs had been outflanked and outwitted and now he was trapped.

With the noose drawing tighter, the Orks made one final attempt to break out of the trap. Ghazghkull ordered his boyz forward in a last desperate attack to capture the bridge over the corrosive sludge known as the Skeletus river. All that lay between the Orks and safety was a handful of Space Marines.

INTRODUCTION

This game was based on the Battle for the Bridge, the third battle in the scenario booklet from the new Warhammer 40,000 boxed set. Each of these Battle for Armageddon scenarios includes full background details, victory conditions and tactical hints both for Space Marine and Ork commanders. In fact the scenarios provide all the information you need to recreate this exciting period of Imperial history, together with a campaign system to link the individual battles together. Whether you're a veteran gamer or a newcomer to the hobby, you'll find the Battle for Armageddon campaign an exciting challenge.

SET-UP

Before we started, we agreed to alter the scenario set-up slightly by adding four extra pieces of jungle terrain, one piece on either side and two pieces placed amongst the buildings in the middle of the table. This gave the tabletop a more varied look and would ensure a close fought battle. Under the new Warhammer 40,000 rules there is a definite maxim that 'the more terrain, the better the game!'

Jake also decided to vary the look of the Space Marine force by including two Ultramarines' battle squads from the Studio collection as replacements for two of the Blood Angels' battle squads listed in the set-up. This didn't alter their weapons or other equipment, it's just that Jake has his own Ultramarine army and wanted to include them in his force.

Adrian also chose to use some of the brilliant new metal Gretchin and replace the card dreadnought with the Studio's metal one. Apart from these small alterations, the scenario was played exactly as it is given in the scenario booklet using most of the miniatures and all of the card buildings in the box.

We played this game on one of our 8'x4' tables here at the Studio, and kept notes of moves and casualties as we went along for later reference when writing up the conflict. Due to the difficulties of taking good photos of a game in progress we took polaroids of the action and re-shot the pictures for this article some time later with proper lighting and cameras. This technique allows us to play an uninterrupted game and still get the best photos.

SPACE MARINES' BATTLE PLAN (Jake Thornton)

"Ork forces have been spotted advancing through sector 307 towards the bridge across the Skeletus. Your squads of Space Marines must hold the bridgehead against the forward elements of the Ork advance until relieved. Do not allow the Orks to capture the bridge under any circumstances – if the situation warrants it the sacrifice of your entire command may be necessary to prevent this. Place your faith in your sanctified weapons and commend thy souls to the Emperor. Let the slaughter commence."

My orders were clear. Defend the bridge at all costs against a horde of ferocious Orks.

Given the tactical finesse that Orks are famous for, I expect nothing less than a solid wall of Orks charging towards me. All Adrian needs to do is to get one intact mob into my deployment zone and he'll get five victory points (VPs). This is a large amount of points and could easily swing the battle in Adrian's favour, so stopping his advance has to be my priority. In order for me to get 5 VPs I have to kill at least twenty-five greenskins. With this in mind, I'll deploy my forces across the whole of my side of the battlefield. A long thin line of troops isn't my favourite set up but I have a large area to defend with only a few men so I have little choice.

The one advantage of a wide deployment is that you can often catch the enemy in your crossfire. What this means is that an Ork hiding behind a wall may be in hard cover to Squad Lazarus' bolters, but will often be in the open to Squad Typhon, Brutus or Cleon. Those hiding from each squad can usually be fired at by another squad. Few pieces of cover offer all-round protection so your crossfire denies the enemy hiding places and you can shoot them to pieces.

The Ork dreadnought poses slightly more of a problem than the mobs as all I have that can deal with it are my missile launchers. I expect these to be prime targets for the Orks but they need good fire arcs to be useful, so I placed them prominently, covering as much of the battlefield as I could.

Rather than using frag missiles against the mobs, I intend to concentrate my missile fire against the dreadnought until it is no longer a threat. I placed my flamers to cover the approaches to my lines in case the Orks tried anything sneaky. The rest of my troops were armed with bolters so I put them in positions where they would be able to see most of the advancing Orks.

Finally, as I was defending a fixed position, I would try to move as little as possible in order to maximise my use of rapid fire. This new rule allows Space Marines to fire twice if they don't move at all in their turn. The Orks only outnumbered me three to one so my main worry now was whether I'd brought along enough ammo for my bolters!

Battle Squads Lazarus and Cleon of the Blood Angels Space Marines.

Grugnat's Goff Ork Mob.

ORK BATTLE PLAN
(Adrian Wood)

"Da boss sez go skrunch up the humies an' let 'em know the rest of uz is comin', grab da bridge an' 'old it until dey get 'ere. You've got a Dreadnought, two mobz of reel hard Goff Orks and four mobz of sneaky Gretchin so you should be able to smush anyfing that's dumb enough to get in yer way."

"Splat as many of da gurly humies as ya can, but don't get yerselves too smashed up an' don't get da Dreadnought trashed. Get a mob or da dread close to da bridge to 'old it."

I have been looking forward to fighting some of the Battle for Armageddon scenarios from the new Warhammer 40,000 boxed set and when Jake challenged me to Mission Three, The Battle for the Bridge, I jumped at the chance.

I decided to play the Orks as they are one of the most colourful and varied armies of the 41st millennium and have a special place in my heart. I usually field an 3000 point Ork army with a broad selection of different troops for different jobs on the battlefield so the fixed army list given in the mission would prove quite a challenge to use effectively.

From the set-up I can see that this scenario is going to be pretty hard on the Orks. All the Marines have to do to win is sit tight in hard cover and rapid fire at me in order to inflict as many casualties as possible as I advance. This is potentially devastating to all of my mobs but particularly the Gretchin who are simply not as tough or resilient as Orks and are likely to sustain heavy casualties.

My battle plan is probably as simple as it could be. Run hell for leather over to the other side of the battlefield and either charge into close combat, or fire en masse at individual Space Marine squads. As Space Marines are so hard to kill, you always need to mass your fire against them to have a hope of causing any damage. The Orks do, however, outnumber the Space Marines three to one and I only need a single unbroken squad of six or more models in the Space Marine's deployment area to gain 5 VPs, more than enough to swing the battle in the Orks favour.

In this game it will be crucial to keep a careful eye on every last victory point. The more I play using the new victory point system the more I become aware of its importance. This is particularly true during the last turn of a battle in which both sides have already achieved their mission objective and often just have to sit tight or establish a fire base. A scenario can be won or lost with the victory points you get for rallying broken troops or reducing a squad to fifty percent of its starting strength.

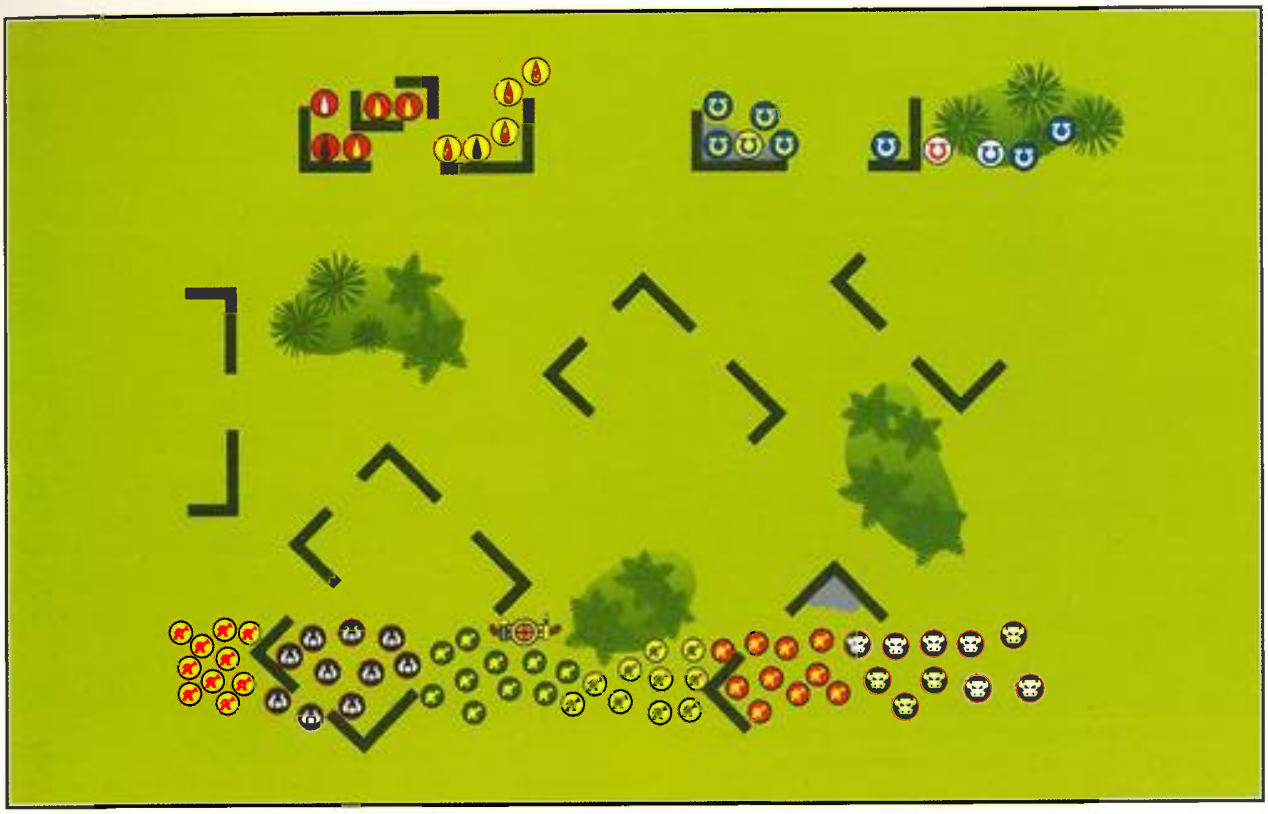
Scumbo's Gretchin mob.

The new card buildings look great when laid out on the table and they'll also provide my boyz with lots of hard cover. The additional trees and undergrowth we added to the scenario create extra blind spots that should allow my mobs to run forward virtually unseen.

Initially, I deployed as far forward and as spread out as possible to avoid the Space Marines' frag missiles. I was aware of the lethality of explosives against closely grouped targets so the mobs made full use of their 2" squad coherency.

The cover on my left flank gives Grot's Gretchin the best chance of making it across the battlefield intact (to pick up the 5 VPs). However, if either of the Ork mobs can close assault the Space Marines they stand a pretty good chance of killing enough to gain some extra VPs, but of course they have to get there first...

My dreadnought, da Krusher, takes pride of place in the centre of my battleline. Da Krusher has the only long range weapons in my army and the best ballistic skill, so this position gives it the most things to shoot at. I might use it to soften the Space Marines up or perhaps to interfere with their overwatch should they choose to try and catch the mobs as they charge forward. I also think that it will attract the attention of the Space Marines with missile launchers who have the only weapons with the range and the power to penetrate da Krusher's thick armour. At this stage I don't consider it wise to move the dreadnought forward to achieve the mission objective. There are more than enough mobs to do that.



THE SPACE MARINES

BLOOD ANGELS TACTICAL SQUAD

All Space Marines are equipped with Mk 7 power armour, bolt pistol, frag grenades, and weapons as noted below.

Battle Squad Lazarus

- Sergeant Lazarus: Chainsword.
- 3 Marines: Boltgun.
- 1 Marine: Flamer.

Battle Squad Cleon

- Brother Cleon: Boltgun.
- 3 Marines: Boltgun.
- 1 Marine: Missile Launcher.

ULTRAMARINE TACTICAL SQUAD

All Space Marines are equipped with Mk 7 power armour, bolt pistol, frag grenades, and weapons as noted below.

Battle Squad Typhon

- Sergeant Typhon: Chainsword.
- 3 Marines: Boltgun.
- 1 Marine: Flamer.

Battle Squad Brutus

- Brother Brutus: Boltgun.
- 3 Marines: Boltgun.
- 1 Marine: Missile Launcher.

THE ORK HORDE

Grugnat's Mob

Ten Orks armed with bolt pistol, axe, frag stikkbomz and flak armour.

Snikbog's Mob

Ten Orks armed with bolt pistol, axe, frag stikkbomz and flak armour.

Grit's Mob

Ten Gretchin armed with autoguns.

Grot's Mob

Ten Gretchin armed with autoguns.

Scumbo's Mob

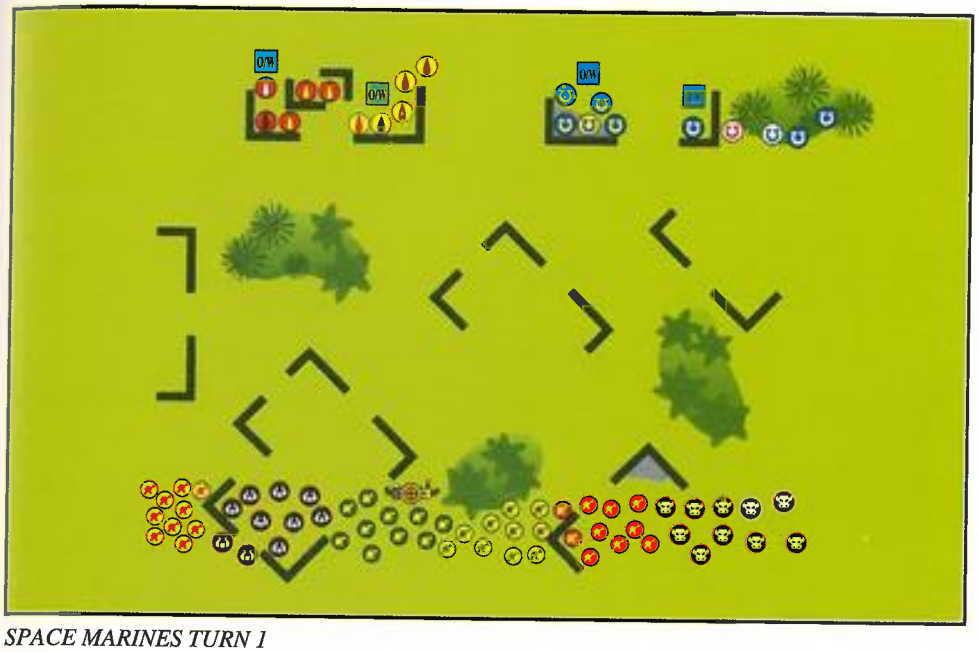
Ten Gretchin armed with autoguns.

Fergit's Mob

Ten Gretchin armed with autoguns.

Da Krusher

One Ork Dreadnought armed with two power claws, lascannon and a heavy bolter.



SPACE MARINES TURN 1

SPACE MARINES TURN 1

To determine who moves first in the new Warhammer 40,000 each side rolls a six sided dice and adds their Strategy Rating to it. With a Strategy Rating of 5 compared to the Orks' 3, I definitely had the advantage here. The Space Marines seized the initiative and went first.

Given their objective I was confident that the Orks would close the range fairly quickly. My mission was to sit tight and blow away the Orks as they raced forwards, and not charge recklessly into hand-to-hand combat where the Orks' numbers would be to their advantage. My troops were set up in the best cover on the board and I saw no reason to leave it. Consequently I placed all four of my squads on overwatch and waited for the Orks to come to me.

This decision meant that many more of the Space Marines would get to fire (all of their bolters started out of range) and the Orks might waste their movement hiding and using cover rather than just piling forward. Although I could see the dreadnought with my missile launcher from the beginning of the turn, I decided to hold my fire. By using overwatch I would still get to fire before it did.

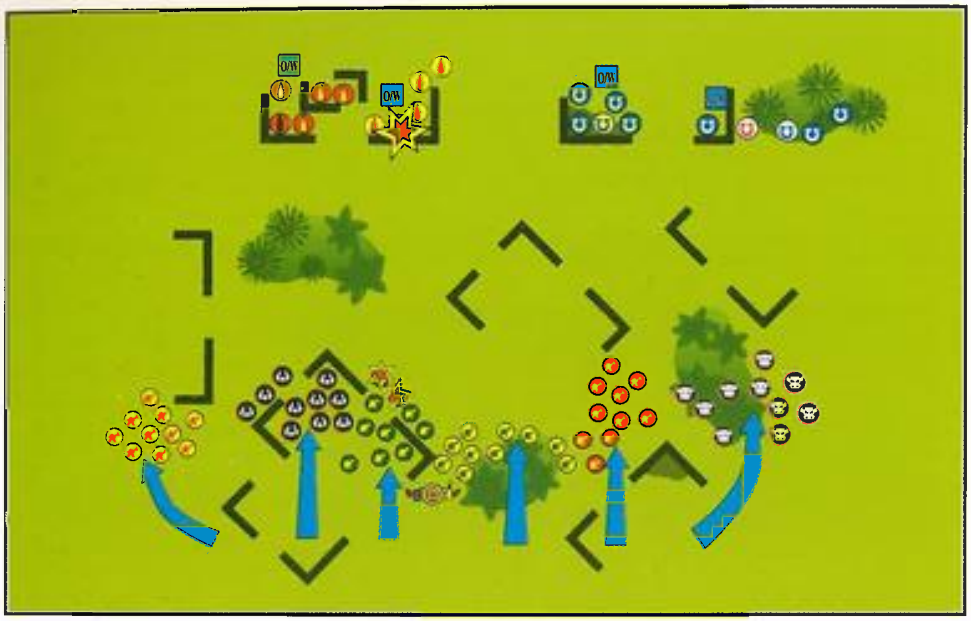
Under the new rules, overwatch is declared for whole squads rather than for individual models. This meant that my bolter fire would all be wasted if I fired the missile launcher in my turn as I wouldn't be able to put the rest of the squad on overwatch. Toasting the dreadnought would have to wait till the Orks' turn.

ORKS TURN 1

Facing Space Marines on overwatch, the Ork mobs nevertheless surged forward as far as they could.

Grugnat's mob ran forwards amid a hail of bolter fire from the overwatching Squad Brutus. The Orks dived into the cover of the ruins, the bolter fire chewing up the ground around them. The old walls shook as explosive rounds thudded into them, but no one was hit.

Battle Squads Typhon and Brutus of the Ultramarines Chapter of Space Marines.



ORKS TURN 1

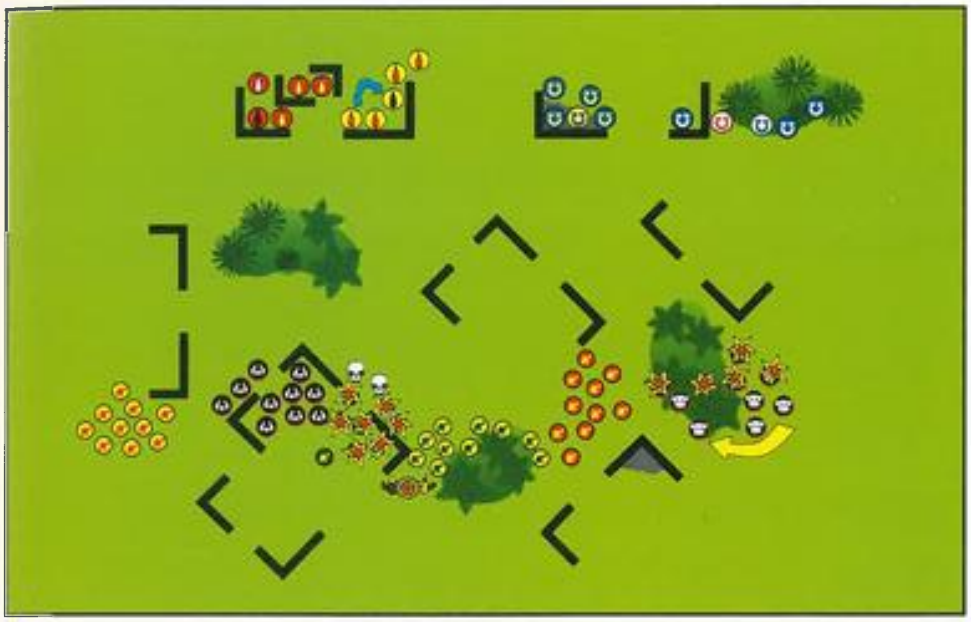
Suddenly Grugnat looked up through a gap in the wall and found himself staring down the barrel of Squad Cleon's missile launcher. With growing fear, he realised that an explosion in the confined space of the building would be lethal and that it was too late to run. Pressing his fingers to his ears and closing his eyes, Grugnat's short, brutal life flashed before him as he waited for the end.

The explosion seemed very far away and Grugnat was still breathing. He cautiously opened an eye and saw a plume of smoke rising from the ruins where the Blood Angel armed with the missile launcher had been taking cover. With a blinding flash, the weapon had misfired, showering the squad with debris. "Fawlty kit", Grugnat smirked.

Although the missile launcher had been destroyed, both of the Space Marines caught in the blast passed their saving throws thanks to the high quality of Space Marine power armour. However, Jake was now down to one missile launcher and my dreadnought hadn't even been scratched.

As Scumbo's Gretchin ran forward, two fell to overwatch fire from Squads Cleon and Brutus. The heavy weapons trooper in Squad Brutus fired a super-krak missile at da Krusher. The missile streaked in and the massive machine was engulfed by a huge explosion. The fireball obscured it for a moment but as the smoke cleared da Krusher could be seen still standing, a little scorched, but undamaged. At this range (over 24") the penetration of the missile had been reduced by 1 and the armour proved too hard to get through. The dreadnought now swivelled its lascannon and a vivid beam of light pulsed across the battlefield towards Squads Cleon and Brutus. However, the Space Marines were firmly concealed amid the ruins and the dreadnought failed to hit anything.

The Ork horde charges towards the Space Marine position.



SPACE MARINES TURN 2

SPACE MARINES TURN 2

As I'd predicted, the Orks had charged forward in one long line. Although my overwatch had been rather disappointing, the greenskins still offered a huge and inviting target for my bolters. The Orks were obviously eager to die so I obliged them.

Squads Typhon and Brutus began the carnage by mowing down five of Snigbot's mob. Spattered with the green blood of their comrades, the rest of the mob fled into the cover of the jungle. One VP to the Space Marines for killing half of the Ork mob.

In the centre, Grit's and Fergit's mobs suffered no ill effects from the overwatch fire as they crossed the open ground between them and the safety of cover.

On the right, Snikbog's Orks ran forward through the jungle towards Squad Typhon. Concealed amongst the foliage ahead, the Space Marines looked like easy meat for the Goffs' axes, and as if in confirmation of their fatė, the burst of overwatch fire from Squad Typhon failed to hit a single one of Snikbog's mob. Howling their battlecry, the Orks readied their weapons and prepared to charge their foes.

On the left flank, Grot's mob moved into the relative safety of the building in front of them. They could now use the walls as cover for the next two turns in order to run forward. Unless they were ambushed in the meantime they would be able to charge into the Space Marines' deployment zone in the last turn.

TURN 1 VICTORY POINTS

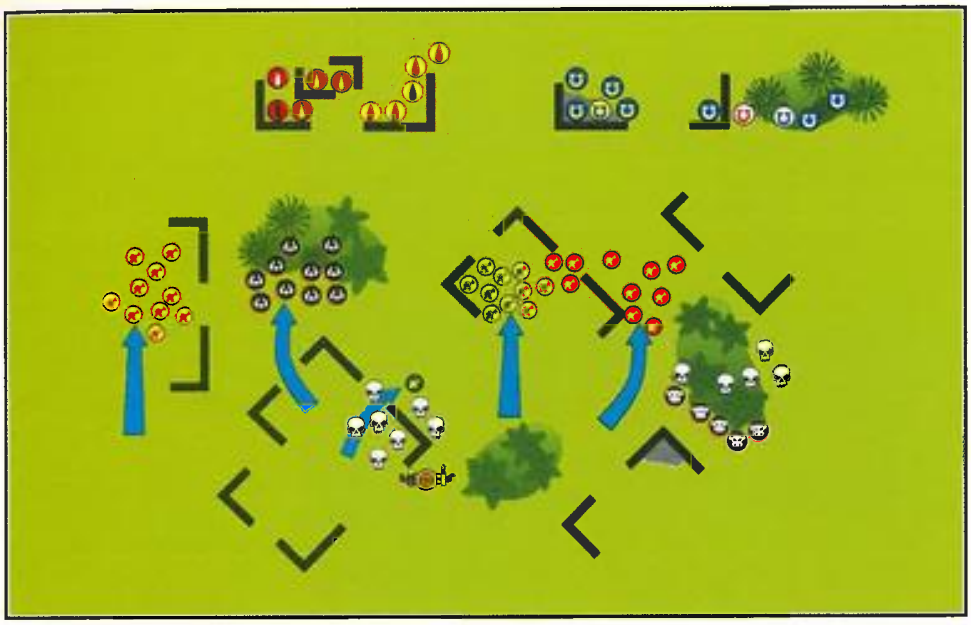
SPACE MARINES 0 POINTS

ORKS 0 POINTS

My other troopers were all closest to Scumbo's mob, so everyone who could see them poured their fire into the hapless Gretchin. The rapid fire of the Space Marines killed all except their leader, Scumbo himself, who resolutely refused either to die or break!

The surviving missile launcher with Squad Brutus hit the dreadnought again, and once more, the missile failed to penetrate its armour because of the long range.

Despite my inability to harm da Krusher this was a much better turn. Twelve kills and a Goff mob broken.



ORKS TURN 2

ORKS TURN 2

Scumbo's Gretchin had taken something of a hammering and Snikbog's Orks had paused to pull themselves together, but the Orks didn't care. Despite these minor setbacks the rest of the mobs surged forward.

Grot's mob continued to dash from cover to cover, while Grugnat's Orks ran up behind the relative safety of the trees in front of Squad Lazarus. Grit's mob took cover behind a wall whilst Fergit's Gretchin presented themselves in the open to draw the Space Marines' fire.

In a courageous, if not stupid display of bravado, the lone Scumbo advanced on Squad Cleon to wreak terrible revenge for his fallen comrades. Needless to say autoguns, unless used in large numbers, are pretty feeble against Space Marine power armour and Scumbo didn't even hit the Space Marine anyway. Scumbo was in deep trouble!

Da Krusher remained where he was, taking advantage of the fact that he was over 24" away from the opposing missile launcher. Firing at Squads Cleon and Brutus, both the heavy bolter and the lascannon failed to hit.

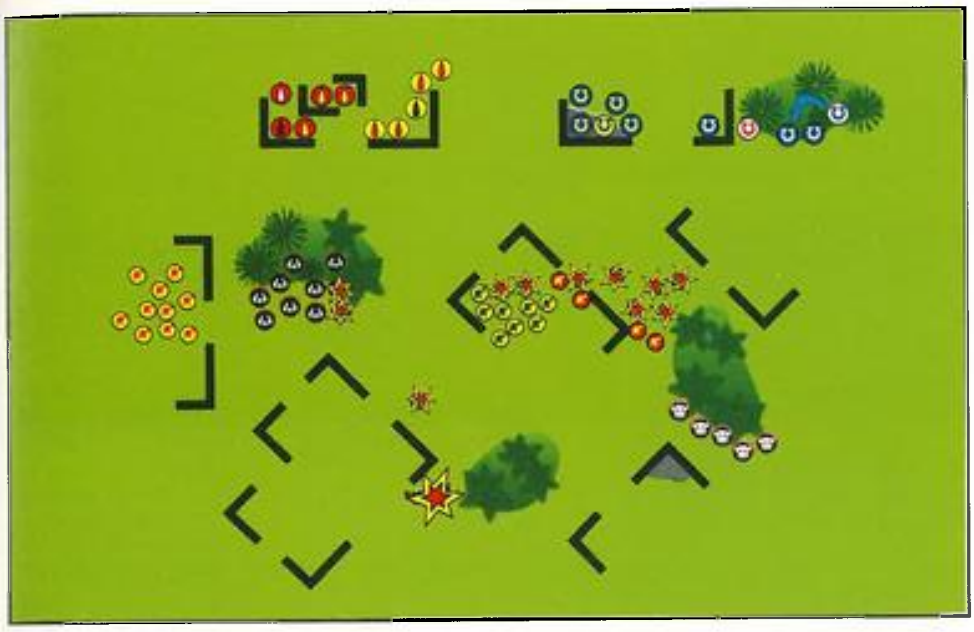
My plan to use the dreadnought as a firebase was failing miserably. I could, however, use it to charge into close combat with Squad Cleon over the next two turns, in an attempt to draw the missile launcher's fire away from the mobs. Snikbog's Orks had rallied and needed a distraction such as a charging dreadnought to help them to edge forward towards the enemy again. Even though the Orks could not reach the deployment zone in time they could try to get VPs by wiping out Squad Typhon.

TURN 2 VICTORY POINTS

SPACE MARINES 1 POINTS

ORKS 0 POINTS

Scumbo – the recklessly brave Gretchin – advances into the teeth of the Space Marines.



SPACE MARINES TURN 3

desperately for control, the Gretchin pilot was fried by a massive electric shock as explosions flashed back to the cramped cockpit and the dreadnought went berserk.

By the end of the turn I'd killed eleven more of the Orkish scum and toasted the dreadnought. Grit's and Grugnat's mobs each had two of their number killed, but as these were the first casualties they had suffered neither had to take a Break test. My marines reloaded their weapons and checked in on the comm-net. Still no casualties and only one turn to go.

SPACE MARINES TURN 3

All along the line the horde of greenskin scum was getting closer. I had hoped to be able to bring Squad Typhon around to reinforce the centre, but the Orks they'd broken last turn rallied immediately and even now were on their way back into the fray. My only movement was to improve my fields of fire by swapping the positions of Squad Typhon's flamer-armed trooper and one armed with a bolter. All of the Space Marines' weapons opened fire once more.

Scumbo was the last of his mob, so killing him was now worth 2 VP. He was rather foolishly standing in the open so troopers from Squad Lazarus saw to it that he wouldn't have the chance to pass another Break test. Fergit's mob too was marked for death, with six of them going to meet their disgusting alien gods. Fergit was, however, totally unimpressed and passed the Break test easily. Yet again Adrian's dice rolls came to his rescue.

Having seen the ineffectiveness of the dreadnought I considered fragging one of the tightly packed herds of greenskins with my missile launcher. The dreadnought was too far away to reach my deployment zone and I didn't think that it could do too much damage as my men were all in hard cover. On the other hand, Adrian's spawny dice rolls for his Break tests had kept all of his mobs moving forward and four of them still had enough greenskins left in them to claim the 5 VPs for getting to my deployment zone.

My choice was made for me when I took a models-eye view. My missile launcher couldn't see enough of any of the mobs to shoot at – just the tops of some spiky helmets – so I fired a super krak at the da Krusher. The missile streaked in and smashed into one of the dreadnought's weapon arms tearing it apart. Exploding ammo crackled around the smoking machine as heavy bolter shells rained down around it. Fighting

ORKS TURN 3

So much for my plan to charge the dreadnought towards the enemy ranks! Da Krusher span around, out of control, and ran smack into a wall shooting wildly with it's remaining lascannon. The Space Marines of Squad Cleon who were its nearest target were only saved by the ruins they were cowering in.

Grugnat's Orks charged towards Squad Lazarus, falling short by a few inches. They now faced the flamer which could easily burn through flak armour regardless of the 5 or 6 save it afforded from area effect weapons. However, if Grugnat and his boyz were to make it into close combat next turn they had to cross the open ground in front of their enemies. Even if they held back there would be no escape from the flamer or from frag grenades thrown by the Space Marines.

Fergit's mob ducked into cover for a turn, hopefully to redeploy and open fire at close range during Turn 4. I wasn't going to make the same mistake as I had done with Scumbo and leave 2 VPs for the Space Marines to snap up. I wouldn't sacrifice these heroic Gretchin who had spectacularly passed a Break test (as had almost every Gretchin mob in the game so far!). Grit's mob now presented themselves as decoys to draw the missile launcher away from Snikbog's Orks who had now moved up into cover behind a wall and would possibly be visible to long-range weapons fire.

All now rested on the last two player turns. The Space Marines would continue to try to fend off the Ork charge but as long as Grot's mob could survive the Space Marines next turn, 5 VPs would be mine!

TURN 3 VICTORY POINTS

SPACE MARINES 4 POINTS

ORKS 0 POINTS

ORKS TURN 3

SPACE MARINES TURN 4

The stubborn refusal of the Orks to lie down and die on cue was becoming rather worrying. This was my last turn and an awfully large number of the orkish filth were still alive.

In order to stop the Orks getting the 5 VPs for reaching my deployment zone I had to break, or reduce to less than six, Grugnat's Orks and Grot's and Grit's Gretchin mobs. Three mobs to destroy in one turn was difficult but by no means impossible. Calling upon the Emperor, the Ultramarines and Blood Angels advanced from cover to get as many shots as possible at the greenskins that weren't cowering out of sight.

Squad Brutus's missile launcher fired a frag missile at Snikbog's Orks who weren't in as much cover as they thought. Three of them were blown to pieces by the blast and the remaining two cowered out of sight. By this stage I expected nothing less than for them to pass their break test which they duly did. This was especially annoying because their failure to pass would have caused them to be removed as casualties (broken with less than 25% remaining) gaining me a VP.

The troopers of Squads Typhon and Brutus all opened fire with their bolters but somehow only managed to kill a single Gretchin between them. I was not impressed at all and began to wonder about their spiritual purity.

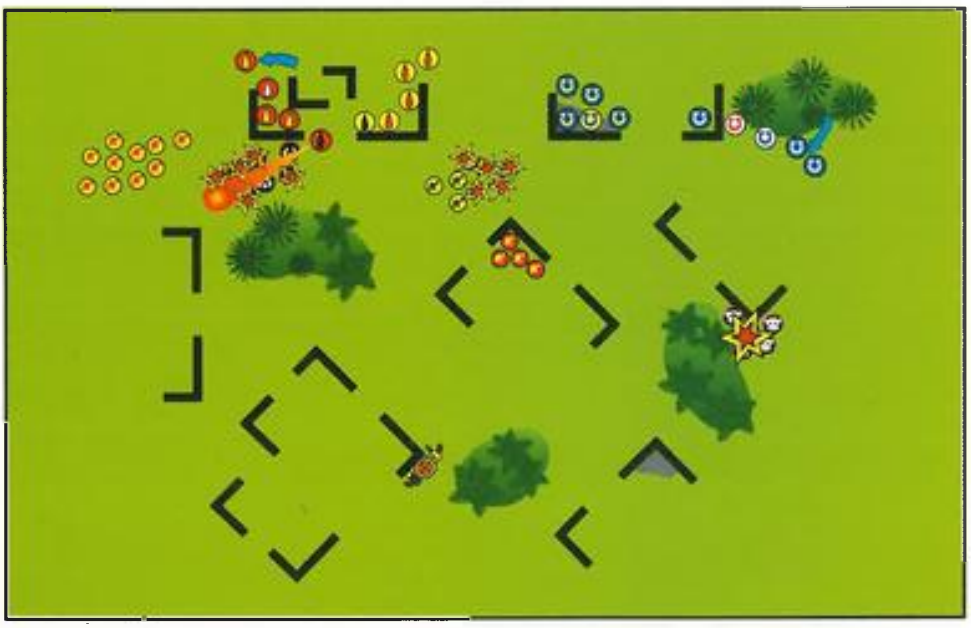
My right flank lay down a storm of bolter fire which reduced Grugnat's mob to 50% for which I got another 1 VP. This also stopped them from claiming the 5 VPs for getting into my deployment zone.

Squad Lazarus' flamer finally got into action torching the charging Goffs. Flames licked around the burning Orks as they ran about on fire, trailing greasy smoke. Two were killed and one of the survivors was left ablaze. Predictably, they also passed their Break test!

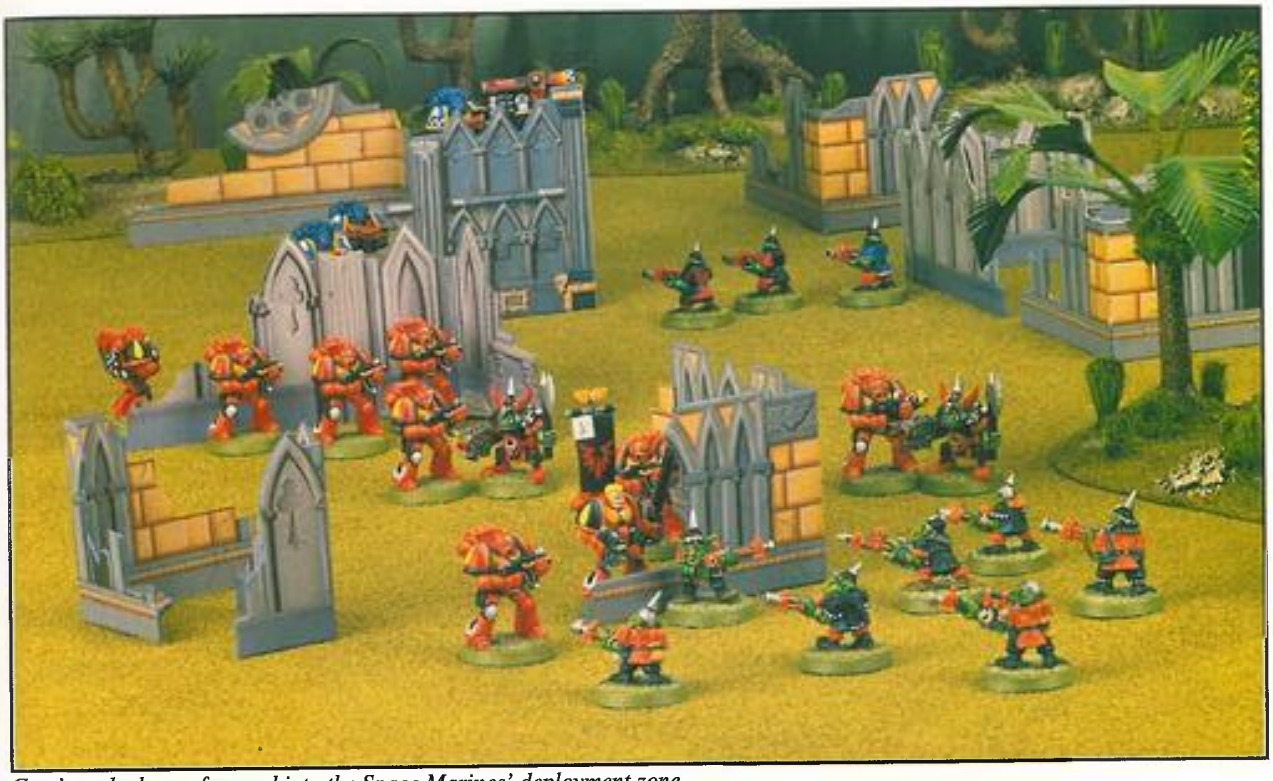
To my frustration Grot's mob walked through the bolter fire as if it wasn't there and survived without a scratch. Grit's mob had more of its number mown down, reducing it to only three, but yet again they passed their Break test!

ORKS TURN 4

All the mobs remained steady during the Space Marine turn despite the horrendous casualties the flamer had inflicted. Even the Gretchin proved as cool as ice. Grot's mob charged forward, a lone Gretchin sacrificing himself by entering close combat with Squad Lazarus' Sergeant so as to allow the rest of the mob to charge into the deployment zone. The Sergeant made short work of him but the Orks had achieved their objective! Five VPs each. Now all I needed to do to win was kill three Space Marines from one squad.



SPACE MARINES TURN 4



Grot's mob charge forward into the Space Marines' deployment zone.

The burning Ork in Grugnat's mob promptly dropped dead and the surviving two Orks passed yet another Break test! This was just as well as they would both have been removed as casualties if they had failed. Squad Lazarus stood amazed as the unstoppable Orks charged into them.

Having already passed a Break test that turn the Orks would not need to take another if, for instance, an Ork died in close combat. The Space Marines would gain no victory points unless both Orks were killed in the fighting.

Before the Space Marines could react to the threat, da Krusher intervened. The crippled dreadnought let fly a wild burst from its lascannon but only succeeded in blowing Grugnat himself into the arms of Gork and Mork! The remaining Goff was beaten back unharmed by his Blood Angel opponent. The Space Marine's bolt pistol had failed to penetrate the Ork's tough hide and again, the Orks were saved from defeat by the fall of the dice.

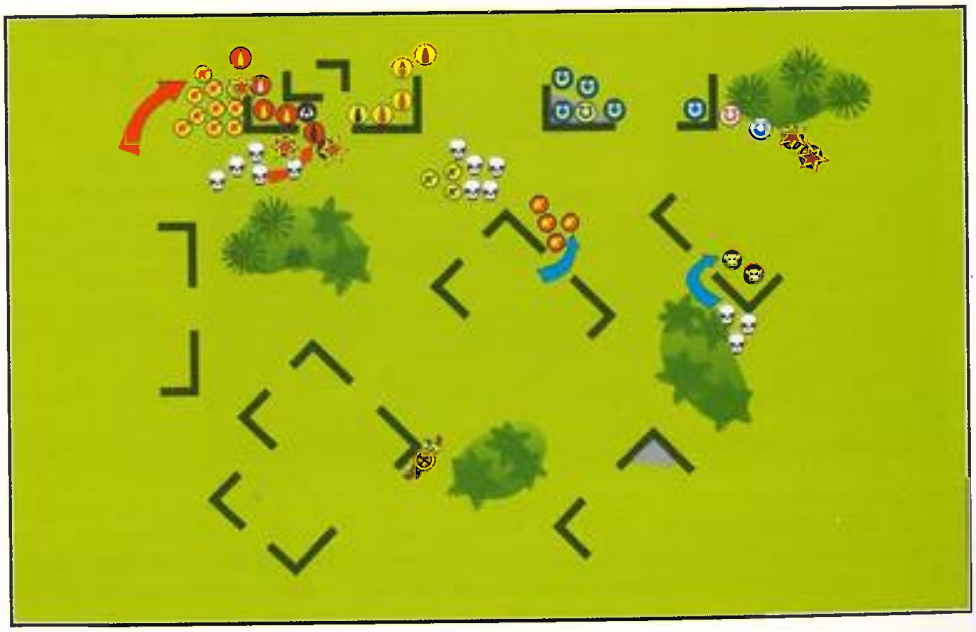
Snikbog's Orks were finally close enough to fire their bolt pistols and promptly killed two Space Marines from Squad Typhon. Fergit's mob now emerged from cover and along with Grit's mob also opened fire. Under such a hail of lead, normal troops would be cut to pieces by the sheer weight of fire. Not so the Space Marines who escaped untouched!

The game was over.

TURN 4 VICTORY POINTS

SPACE MARINES 5 POINTS

ORKS 5 POINTS



ORKS TURN 4

NOTES FROM THE RECLUSIAM (Jake Thornton)

Next time Adrian, next time!

By the end of Turn 4, the bodies of over two-thirds of the Ork horde littered the battlefield . Forty-one greenskins lay dead or dying, the Ork dreadnought was crashing about wildly, shooting up its own side and I had lost only two Space Marines. To spoil this delightful image one measly mob of Gretchin had evaded the cleansing fire of my bolters and reached my deployment zone. Only one mob, but that was enough.

What went wrong? How could the subhuman scum have made it so far? I shall spend much time in the Reclusiam meditating upon this.

I think that my tactics were right in the circumstances though hindsight suggests that a heavy use of grenades in my last turn may have been more effective. My original idea had been that I would sit and fire for a couple of turns, then, as mobs broke and gaps appeared in the Ork line, I would redeploy forward. Gaps simply never appeared.

To my immense frustration Adrian only failed one of the five Break tests I forced his mobs to take, and even that mob rallied immediately. I don't know what Warboss Wood puts in their fungus beer but it makes those Gretchin unstoppable.

From my side of the table the Orks did much as expected with the single exception of the dreadnought. Da Krusher hung about at the back shuffling its feet nervously and served only to draw the fire of my missile launcher. The horrible possibility of having to deal with the dreadnought in hand-to-hand combat never arose and that was fine by me, but perhaps not Adrian's best plan.

All things considered I think that I fulfilled my brief fairly well. The Ork assault had been shot to pieces and the Space Marines were still in place. This time was a draw but next time there would be no mercy.

'ERE WE GO 'ERE WE GO! (Adrian Wood)

In hindsight, I now realise how close to victory the Orks were. However, had it not been for some amazing dice rolls, particularly for the Break tests, things could have been very different. The advance, en masse, of the Ork forces certainly tied up Jake's Space Marines on all fronts so that he just couldn't cover Grot's Gretchin creeping round the side into his deployment zone.

Losing Scumbo was a stupid error. As I said at the beginning, you must not give away points to the enemy like that. In the end I wasted an ice-cool Gretchin and, more importantly, 2 VPs! Fergit's mob was a good example of avoiding the complete loss of a squad which has been badly mauled. Even though they inflicted no casualties themselves in the last turn at least they were still in the battle to try.

Da Krusher seemed to do very little in the way of actual combat. The only time he managed to hit anything was in the last turn when he killed Grugnat. He did attract a lot of fire from the surviving heavy weapon when the Space Marines could have been punching great holes in the Ork attack and this was what I had intended from the start. At least he didn't grind to a halt completely and give Jake another victory point.

On the whole the favourite Ork tactic of using their considerable numbers to swamp an enemy worked really well. Space Marines excel in either lightning raids or, as this scenario demonstrated, digging their heels in and relying on their superiority at arms. However, there are only ever a handful of them and they are susceptible to being overwhelmed. The tactic worked well and even though I didn't win I certainly gave *"da gurly Space Marines somefing to fink about!"*

WITCH HUNT

By Jake Thornton and Adrian Wood

This month's battle is a mighty clash between an Eldar Warhost from the Biel-Tan craftworld and an Ork horde led by Warboss Grishnak. The game uses the new psychic system from Dark Millennium and amply demonstrates the destructive power of psykers on the battlefields of the forty-first millennium.

The Eldar Farseer stood motionless amid the battered remains of the old refinery. The vast bulk of the storage tanks loomed on either side of him, stained and pitted by the ravages of the jungle that had crept back, eager to reclaim what the settlers had abandoned. Twisted girders and crumbling plasticrete showed where the dormitories had stood and amongst these sorry remains the Eldar army had deployed. Waiting for the Orks.

The morning passed quietly with little but the buzz of mosquitoes and the calls of strange, brightly coloured birds to break the silence of the ruins. As they had settled in to await their enemy, the Eldar warriors had succumbed to the desolate atmosphere of the place and now sat quietly, each lost in his own thoughts.

Suddenly, a loud explosion rent the air followed by raucous laughter. More explosions followed and more laughter. The Orks had arrived. Immediately the Eldar warriors began preparing themselves, making final checks on their weapons and wargear, readying themselves for the fight to come. As the Eldar prepared the sounds of the Ork's approach grew louder. They crashed through the undergrowth blasting away at anything that moved, bolter shells ripping apart trees and wildlife with equal efficiency.

This general advance stumbled to a halt among the cover of a group of rock spires that hid most of the Orks from view. Occasionally their back banners were visible as they moved about, forming their battle line and waiting for the order to attack.

With fluid grace the Farseer motioned to the Scouts who had been awaiting his orders. They gathered about him as he gave his directions to the heavily camouflaged Eldar warriors.

"Move in as close as you can." He said. "Prevent their army from dispersing. Slaughter them without mercy."

The Scouts nodded and silently moved off in the direction of the Ork lines, their cameleoline cloaks blurring their forms as they disappeared into the ruins.

Silence descended once again as both armies busied themselves with final preparations. The Orks had paused briefly in their destruction as they formed up in their different mobs.

The Orks began to advance, chanting as they came a green wave working itself into a killing frenzy. The Farseer stood calmly waiting for further reports, not wanting to commit more warriors until he knew the Orks' deployment.

The pilot of the War Walker was the first to call in over the comm-net. Then the Scouts. Then everyone could see them.

The Farseer's voice crackled over the Eldar comm-net. "Fire on my command".

INTRODUCTION

With Dark Millennium about to be released, we've recently been playing a lot of games of Warhammer 40,000 at the Studio. The Dark Millennium supplement adds a vast range of equipment and wargear to your games. In the following battle we used the expanded psychic system, the new victory points tables, the strategy cards and several of the dozens of new wargear cards. Together these add an extra level of excitement and conflict to your Warhammer 40,000 games.

At the time of writing, the new Eldar Codex was just being finished and so we were able to use the revised and enlarged Eldar army list. We also had an Eldar army in the Studio that had been painted by Fred Reed who works in our Bristol store. This army will be featured in its own article in a future issue, but first we wanted to try it in battle. For opponents, we looked no further than our own Ork army and the stage was set for an exciting battle.

We set up this game on one of the Studio's eight foot by four foot gaming tables and kept notes as we played. Because it is very difficult to take high quality photographs in the middle of the battle, we just took snapshots of each turn. After the battle was over, we used these photographs along with the maps we had made during the game to recreate the battle and set it up with proper lighting and camera equipment.

We both chose our armies and drew mission and strategy cards for the battle. Dark Millennium includes two new missions – *Guerrilla War* and *Witch Hunt* – and we added these to the mission cards from Warhammer 40,000. As it was, Jake drew *Witch Hunt* and Adrian drew *Take and hold*. Determining your mission after you have chosen your army makes a big difference to your force selection as you need to take troops that are good all round and will be useful whatever mission you are ordered to carry out. This is very important as you can make a battle much harder for yourself by picking the wrong troop types.

Having set up the scenery before either of us had drawn our missions, we then added an extra piece to represent the Ork's objective. This crate of vital supplies was in the middle of the refinery complex that we had assembled from Adrian Wild's brilliant new industrial scenery.

Finally, we randomly chose the psychic powers for each of our psykers. The Farseer and Warlock drew from the Eldar Runic powers deck, and the Warphead from the Waaagh! powers. With both forces ready battle commenced.

THE ELDAR WARHOST

by Jake Thornton

The Eldar are an unusual race. Not only do they not have the numbers to make mass attacks like the Orks, they also lack the armoured toughness of the Space Marines. Despite this, they can be devastating at long range with their shuriken catapults and scatter lasers, or lethal close-in with attacks by Howling Banshees and Striking Scorpion Aspect Warriors.

The big danger in selecting an Eldar army is trying to be good at everything. Eldar troops are specialists, and to function well as a whole, you need to decide what style of play you feel most comfortable with and what is most effective against your enemy.

To beat the Orks I would have to destroy hordes of lightly armoured troops. Whatever the mission I drew, I knew that I would be badly outnumbered. I also knew that I wouldn't be able to survive drawn-out close combat with dozens of Goffs, even though the Eldar army has some of the best hand-to-hand troops in Warhammer 40,000. Charging into hordes of Orks with Howling Banshees is all very well for the first turn but tends to fall apart when the survivors open up with their massed bolt pistol fire at point blank range. You kill an Ork for every Aspect Warrior in your first turn, then they wipe you out. The Eldar are a dying race and cannot afford this sort of exchange. In hand-to-hand combat, the bonuses for multiple attackers make sheer weight of numbers a viable tactic against even the highest quality warriors. I would therefore need to be able to kill as many of the greenskins as possible before they came within charge range.

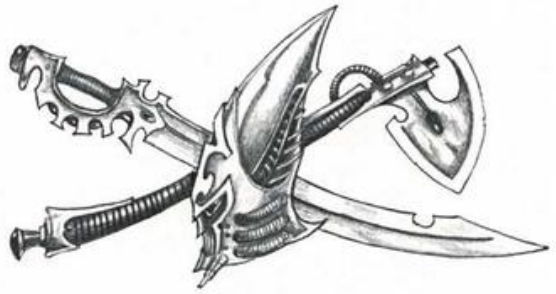
For this reason I decided to take an Eldar army that dealt death from afar. All my Guardians would be equipped with shuriken catapults, I would take both War Walkers and the anti-grav platform for the scatter lasers. From behind my lines the Dark Reapers would rain frag missiles on the approaching masses and in front, my Scouts would stall and confuse the Ork advance with their needle gun fire and frag grenades. I decided to deploy in depth and try to defend the whole board.

I started by picking three small Guardian squads of five models each. The Codex Eldar army list allows Guardian squads to be anything from five to ten models strong but I stuck to small squads to allow me to cover several areas of attack at once. Because of the points cost of my warriors, I knew that I would only be able to field a small force compared to the Orks. These few Eldar would make a rather thin line across the eight foot wide tables that we use at the Studio. If the Ork's mission was Dawn Raid then I would have a lot of trouble stopping them.

The two Aspect Warrior squads that I chose were both picked for very specific tasks. The Dark Reapers were perfect support troops. With their Dark Reaper range finders and missile launchers they would be able to lay down a barrage with near unerring accuracy anywhere they could see. All I had to do was to find them a good vantage point. I planned to use them to hold down one flank by themselves.

Swooping Hawks are definitely my favourite Aspect Warriors. They are so mobile that they are able to stall enemy attacks and breakthroughs anywhere on the battlefield, giving the rest of the army time to react and redeploy to face new threats. They are also ideal for launching surprise raids wherever the enemy is weakest.

The Eldar scatter lasers on the anti-grav platform and the War Walkers were my best weapons for clearing areas of the table of Orks. These were to cover the more important sectors of the board whilst the Guardian squads covered the rest. War Walkers are also fast, and this meant that they would be able to shoot up one of the Ork flanks and still have time to redeploy in order to have an effect elsewhere before the battle ended.



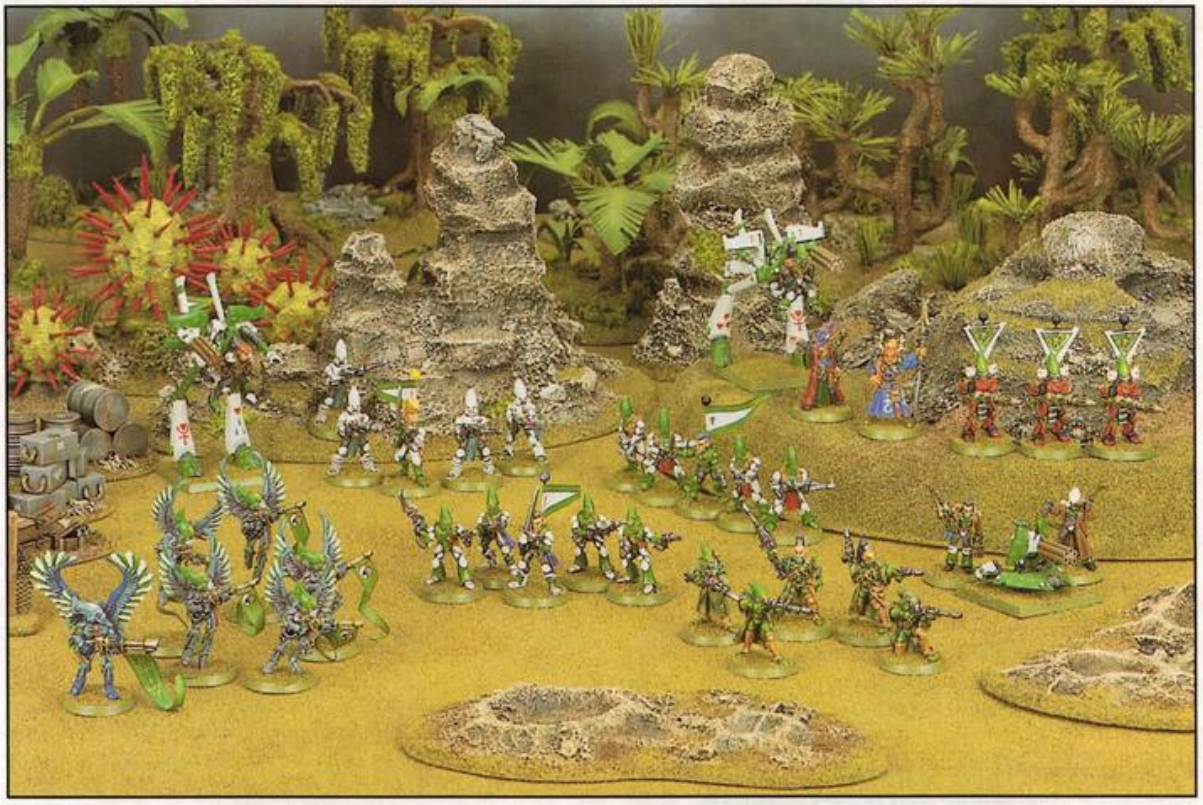
Finally I took two psykers – a Farseer and a Warlock. The Farseer is a very important character in the Eldar army as he is not only a fourth level psyker, but also their army commander when the Avatar is not present. This combination of psyker and commander is quite unusual and only occurs in Eldar, Tyranid and Genestealer armies. In a battle this means that your commander is even more deadly than usual, but this expensive investment of points has to be protected. The enemy will surely pick him out as a prime target whenever they can and you therefore need to be particularly careful about the risks you run with him.

I was hoping that my Farseer would get the awesome power *Executioner* which would enable him to kill Orks without endangering himself. I was lucky, and not only drew that, but also *Fortune*, *Doom* and *Destructor*. *Fortune* gives Eldar within 12" of the Farseer a +2 bonus to their saving throws. *Doom* selects one enemy model and makes all unsaved hits automatically wound at twice their normal rate. *Destructor* is an awesome power which unleashes a storm of devastation that travels across the board. My Warlock drew the power *Eldritch Storm* which creates a whirling maelstrom that throws aside anyone caught under the template.

Dark Millennium includes a new set of cards called Strategy Cards. Before the battle, both sides get a random strategy card for each thousand points in their army. This meant that both Adrian and I got two strategy cards, the ones I picked being *Craven Cowardice* and *Insane Bravery*. Both of these cards are played on broken squads, one causing an enemy squad to scatter completely – removing it from the battle, and the other instantly rallying one of your own. Some of the strategy cards are played before the battle begins, but the two I had drawn would obviously have to wait until we had seen some combat.

ELDAR WARHOST

1499 Points



ELDAR FARSEER

Farseer equipped with Rune armour and armed with a laspistol. He carries three wargear cards – *Cameleoline, Digital Lasers and Executioner* and is also armed with plasma grenades.

WARLOCK

Warlock (level one) equipped with Rune armour and armed with a laspistol. He carries two wargear cards – *Cameleoline* and a *Force Sword*. He is also armed with frag and plasma grenades. **Note:** My opponent agreed to my duplication of *Cameleoline*.

SWOOPING HAWK EXARCH

Swooping Hawk Exarch armed with a laspistol and equipped with Exarch armour. He carries one wargear card – *Lasblaster*. He also has the warrior powers *Battle Fortune* and *Crack Shot*.

SWOOPING HAWK ASPECT WARRIORS

5 Swooping Hawks armed with lasguns, laspistols, Swooping Hawk grenade packs with frag and krak grenades and equipped with Hawk armour.

DARK REAPER ASPECT WARRIORS

3 Dark Reapers armed with missile launchers with frag and krak grenades. They have Reaper range finders, laspistols and Reaper armour.

SCOUT SQUAD

5 Scouts armed with needle sniper rifles and laspistols and equipped with mesh armour and cameleoline cloaks. The entire squad is also armed with frag grenades.

3 GUARDIAN SQUADS

5 Guardians per squad, each armed with a shuriken catapult and frag grenades. One model in each squad also carries a flamer and the leader is armed with a laspistol and power sword.

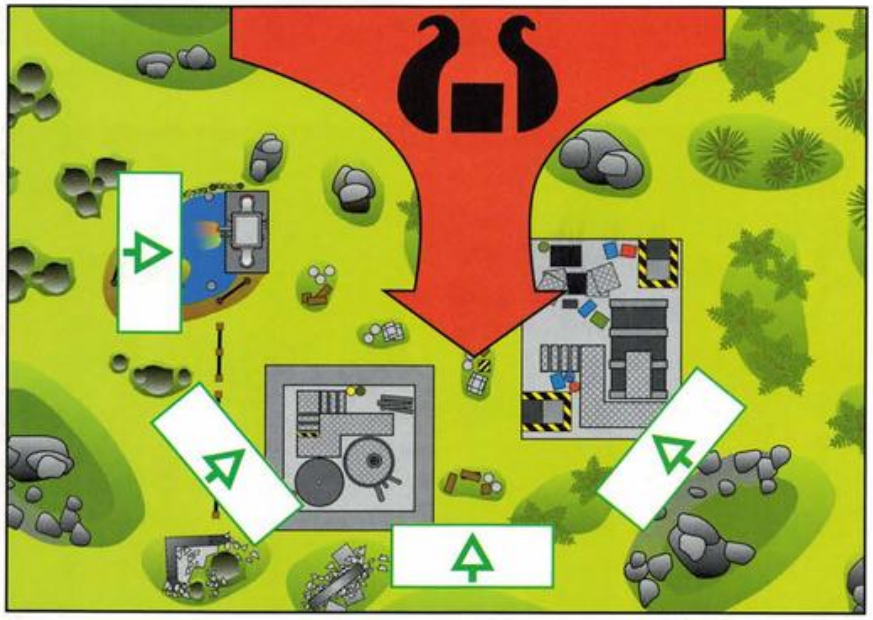
SCATTER LASER

1 Scatter Laser on anti-grav platform.

WAR WALKERS

2 War Walkers with lascannons and scatter lasers.

ELDAR PLAN



Before we picked our Mission cards and the Orks deployed, all I had decided upon was the general strategy of a firepower based army. This obviously meant that I would spend most of the game sitting back and firing as the Orks advanced. Even the most glorious close combat troops can die horribly when swamped by huge numbers of Orks, and I've even seen Gretchin slaughter Harlequins in hand-to-hand combat. I wasn't going to waste my forces in the kind of battle that favoured my enemy.

I was very happy to see that Adrian had deployed on a narrow front. This enabled me to halve the length of my battleline and allowed all of my weapons to bear on a much smaller area. I jumped at the chance to keep him hemmed in and deployed both my Dark Reapers and Scouts with this in mind.

I had been dreading having to defend the whole width of the table against a *Dawn Raid*, *Engage and Destroy* or *Guerrilla War*. Luckily Adrian drew the mission *Take and Hold* and I got *Witch Hunt*. I couldn't have come up with a better combination if I had chosen them myself . The Orks were after a fixed objective so I knew where they would be going. All I needed to do was to concentrate on killing one model, the Warphead, whilst keeping the Ork's objective clear of greenskins.

In Warhammer 40,000 I've found that if you can achieve your objective and stop your opponent from achieving theirs, then you will almost always win. This isn't always true, as **Angels of Death** in White Dwarf 166 shows, but the side which hasn't achieved its objective needs to inflict a massive amount of damage to catch up.

Having seen the Ork deployment and our Mission cards I decided to set a trap for the Orks. With the help of the terrain, the fuel silos and refinery, I would funnel the Ork advance onto a killing zone around their objective where they could be shot like fish in a barrel (see map above). I had to keep them from spreading out around the sides of the refinery where they would begin to surround me by sheer weight of firepower. The more I could keep the Orks bunched up, the more they would get in each other's way and the better a target they would be for my scatter lasers and missiles.

My Scouts were deployed as far forward as they could go and very close to the Ork's position. Their sniper fire on the exposed Ork flank would be a thorn in Adrian's side from turn one. Once the Orks began to advance they would be hit from both sides as the approach to the objective was under the sights of the Dark Reapers on my left and a War Walker on my right. The objective itself was a killing zone overlooked by no less than three scatter lasers, two squads of Guardians with shuriken catapults and my Farseer. I didn't expect that anything the Orks had would survive that.

The Ork's own aggression would force them forwards and the Dark Reapers, War Walkers and terrain would keep them bunched up. Those who survived running the gauntlet of frag missiles would arrive nicely bunched up in the killing zone, ready to be gunned down by my scatter lasers. Above the carnage the Swooping Hawks would act as a mobile reserve and close the lid on the trap.

ORK ARMY

I was certainly looking forward to this encounter between the Orks and the Eldar. The Orks are my favourite Warhammer 40,000 army and the Eldar a close second. Both armies are highly unusual when compared to the Space Marines and require practice and careful planning to use effectively.

I started by considering my enemy. I have commanded, as well as having been on the receiving end of the Eldar on numerous occasions. Eldar are faster than Orks, more accurate with their weapons and have far better leadership with even basic troops having a leadership of eight. They are however, not very tough and die quickly when hit by massed bolter fire.

As I have played against Jake on a number of occasions, I tend to know the kinds of armies and tactics he favours. Jake prefers to keep Orks at arm's length and shoot them up with long range weapons, regardless of the mission objective. I guessed that the Dreadnought and War Walker with its scatter laser would be in favour. The Dark Reapers and Psykers would also be handy to attack from afar. I didn't expect any frightening close combat troops as this can be the equivalent of a fencer fighting a bear. For all their skill, a squad of Howling Banshees would easily be crushed by the Orks once the initial carnage was over. Should Jake be true to form, the heavy weapons and Psykers in his army would cost him most of his points. Overall I didn't expect to face a large army.

Orks tend to outnumber the Eldar, usually by 3 to 1. However, without a strong head a huge and powerful body is useless. The Ork Warboss is the brains (such as they are) of an Ork army and without his leadership the army easily crumbles. I decided to equip him with a Displacer field which, in my opinion, is almost compulsory for an Ork leader. I used the model of the great Ork Ghazghkull Thraka to represent him and as the model carried a combi-weapon I decided to buy him a bolta-bolta. I didn't expect him to see front-line action, but should anyone threaten him behind the lines he would be able to take care of himself.

A Battle Standard is a must for the Orks and without any extra equipment only costs fifty points. The reassuring presence of the army's banner is vital in maintaining morale amongst the boyz and has held together many an army that otherwise would have run away. It is not only very useful in battle, but costs so few points that he doesn't give away any victory points if he is killed.

The new Warphead Weirdboy being developed for the Ork Codex is a vital part of the army. Psychic power used in battle is an important part of the 41st Millennium. The Warphead is the most powerful of the Ork's Psykers and is more than a match for any enemy.

We were really excited about using the new Psychic combat system in Dark Millennium that Andy Chambers lent to us. Having read the rules, I picked four Ork Psychic powers at random: *Da Krunch*, *Waaagh!* *'Edbutz* and *Brain Bursta*. As you can no doubt tell, Ork Psychic powers are simple and effective. *Da Krunch* causes a huge ectoplasmic foot to descend and flatten the enemy. If an enemy model fails to jump out the way by rolling under his initiative the results are a strength 10 hit, a -6 save modifier and probably death.

Waaagh! effects Ork mobs within 36", increasing their weapon skill and allowing them to re-roll failed leadership tests. *Waaagh!* will also stop an enemy Psyker from using his psychic powers and can cause a wound unless the effected Psyker rolls equal to or under his mastery level. *'Edbutz* is a type of psychic duel that allows the Warphead to attack a Psyker in much the same way as *Waaagh!*

Brain Bursta fires a stream of Psychic force that can kill an enemy model in line of sight. *Brain Bursta* is probably one of the psychic powers I like least because the Warphead has to stick his head out of hiding to use it! This is because the only weakness of a Warphead is his lack of armour and so he must be kept as safe as possible from enemy fire.

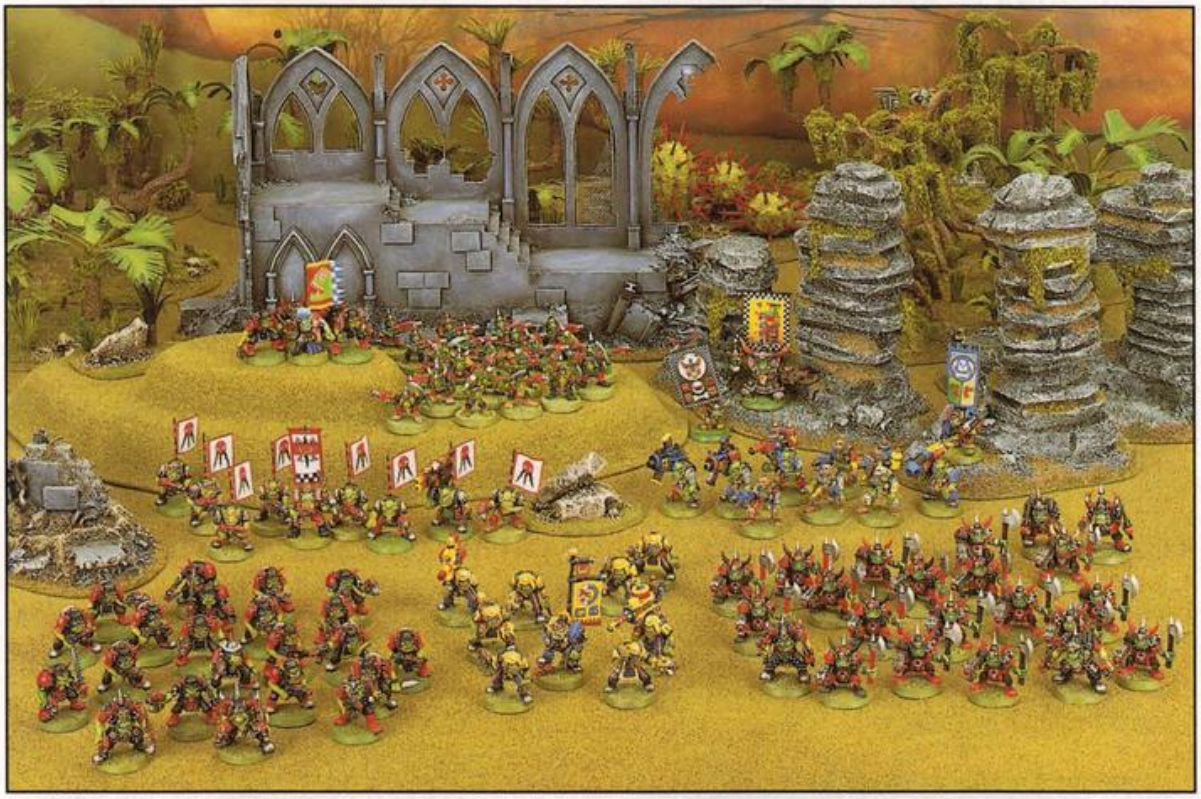
Each part of an Ork army fulfils a specific role. Gretchin are literally a screen of bodies for the rest of the army to advance behind. A twenty strong mob of Gretchin, particularly when in range of the Warboss and rolling on his leadership, will absorb horrendous casualties and not run. This tactic prevents your better mobs from taking casualties before they get into close range, where Orks fight their best.

The Goffs are always good stock hand-to-hand troops and because the Orks can field large mobs of boyz, I took the biggest mobs I could. Two twenty strong mobs, each with a smattering of Skarboyz and two extra Nobz would be very hard to destroy. They are hard to manoeuvre as well, but they won't break easily.

For support I favour Death Skulls armed with heavy bolters and stubbers which are both sustained fire weapons. An Ork's average Ballistic Skill is compensated for either by their large numbers or by weapons that hit many times if they do hit. Sustained fire works by scoring a hit and then rolling the sustained fire dice to determine how many extra hits or jams the weapon gets. Should an Ork hit with a sustained fire weapon he at least has the chance of hitting plenty of times. I armed their Nob with a plasma pistol. The studio army also features a mob of Bad Moons with a lascannon and autocannon and a mob of Evil Sunz with a multi-melta. These mobs would provide the backbone of the army to support the Goff muscle. In total, my selection came to 1500 points.

WAAAGH GRISHNAK

1500 Points



WARBOSS GRISHNAK

Warboss Grishnak is armed with a bolt pistol, sword, and frag stikkbombz. He wears flak armour. and has two wargear cards – *Combi-weapon* (bolta - bolta) and a *Displacer field*.

BATTLE STANDARD

Gretchin carrying a battle standard.

WARPHEAD AND MINDERZ

Weirdboy Warphead and **4 Minderz**. The **Warphead** has flak armour and carries one wargear card – *Weirdboy Staff*. The **Minderz** are armed with bolt pistols and axes, frag stikkbombz and flak armour.

GOFF MOB

18 Goffs armed with bolt pistols, axes, frag stikkbombz and wearing flak armour. **2 Skarboyz** equipped as above but with power swords.

2 Goff Nobz wearing flak armour and armed with bolt pistols and chainswords.

GRETCHIN MOB

20 Gretchin equipped with flak armour and armed with autoguns, or autopistols and knives.

GOFF MOB

10 Goffs armed with bolt pistols, axes, frag stikkbombz and wearing flak armour. **10 Skarboyz** equipped as above but with chainswords.

2 Goff Nobz wearing flak armour and armed with bolt pistols and power swords.

DEATH SKULL MOB

8 Death Skulls equipped with flak armour and armed with bolters and frag stikkbombz. Two Orks carry heavy stubbers, two more carry heavy bolters and one is armed with a heavy plasma gun.

1 Death Skulls Nob armed with a plasma pistol and wearing power armour.

BAD MOONS MOB

8 Bad Moons equipped with flak armour and armed with bolters and frag stikkbombz. One Ork carries a lascannon and one Ork carries an autocannon.

1 Bad Moons Nob wearing flak armour and armed with a bolt pistol and an axe.

EVIL SUNZ MOB

8 Evil Sunz equipped with flak armour and armed with bolters and frag stikkbombz. One Ork carries a multi-melta.

1 Evil Sunz Nob wearing flak armour and armed with a bolt pistol and a chainsword.

DA PLAN

The Eldar had to hunt down and kill my Warphead. I had to *Take and Hold* a point situated between the two main buildings of the refinery complex. As we often do at the Studio, we placed an extra piece of scenery to represent the objective. In this case we used a distinctive crate with a yellow and black striped top which you can see on the map. We then drew strategy cards and I got *Malfunction* and *Brilliant Strategy*. With these in mind I formulated my plan.

In Warhammer 40,000 it is very important to try to achieve your mission objective. The five extra victory points that you get will nearly always give you the lead. I therefore focussed heavily on charging the objective when formulating da plan. There was plenty of cover leading up to the objective and a reasonably narrow fire corridor. Jake would be bound to concentrate at least two War Walkers on this area if nothing else. For this reason I would pack in as many Gretchin as possible to tie up their firepower until the Orks were close enough to charge. I would probably lose quite a few Gretchin as I advanced but that's what they're for, and if the Bad Moons could hit the War Walkers with their heavy weapons I would reach my objective. The Warphead would also prove useful in destroying the War Walkers.

Orks are very dependant on the Warboss for leadership so I deployed them with that in mind. This dictates an almost symmetrical set up for the Orks which is effective if a little predictable. The Warboss took up position in cover, facing my objective, where his influence would be strongest. I then set up the rest of the army around him.

My deployment certainly raised eyebrows amongst some of the staff here at the Studio. My mobs were packed closely together to focus on advancing towards the objective. I decided to risk my *Brilliant Strategy* card in order to grab the first turn and disperse the mobs as soon as my movement phase began. Both Goff mobs, the Gretchin mob and the Evil Sunz made up this forward assault.

However unmanoeuvrable this deployment may appear, in practice, the relentless advance of seventy boyz always gains ground regardless of the losses incurred. These mobs would swamp the objective within a few turns. I guessed that the Dark Reapers would deploy on the hill to my right, and hopefully the Evil Sunz could use their multi-melta's large blast radius to give them a taste of their own medicine.

I deployed the Deaths Skulls on a spire of granite to cover the advance of the whole army with their heavy bolters and stubbers, but didn't want them to stand in the open too much. I kept the Bad Moons covering the area around the objective with their lascannon and autocannon, ready to deal with anything large that might try to halt the advance, such as one of the War Walkers. Also the *Malfunction* card would allow me to damage one of Jake's support weapons or War Walkers without firing a shot.

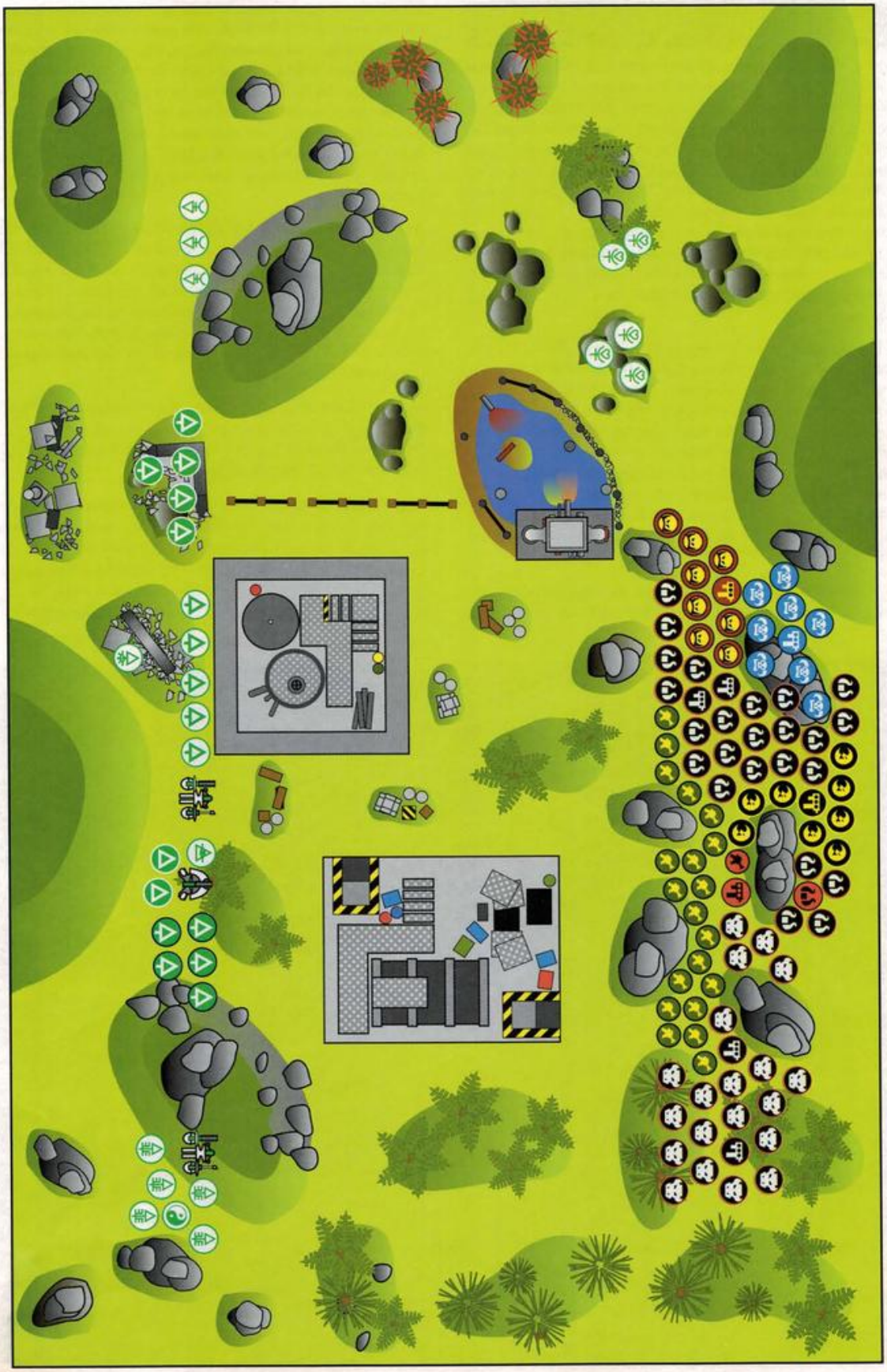
Once I had considered my attack strategy I had to decide where I was going to place my Warphead. As the Eldar mission was to kill him, the Warphead had suddenly become a hazard as well as a benefit to my army. I had to be aware of the threat to his life, but couldn't allow this to stifle his effectiveness during the attack. As long as I kept him amongst the boyz Jake wouldn't be able to specifically target him.

The Farseer was the greatest threat to the Warphead, being able to attack the Warphead with psychic powers from the other side of the battlefield. The Farseer in turn would become a target for the Warphead, who would slowly whittle down his wounds and keep him occupied, often whilst benefiting his own comrades. The psychic power *Waaagh!* is a case in point. When unleashed, any Orks within 36" of the Warphead add one to their weapon skill and re-roll any failed leadership tests. Also, any enemy psykers in range are knocked flat unless they roll equal to or under their psychic level on a D6. Should they fail, they suffer one wound and are unable to use psychic powers until next turn.

The only other threat to my Warphead were the Swooping Hawks who I knew were Jake's favourite Aspect Warriors. As long as the Warphead remained in cover the Swooping Hawks would have to land and shoot first before using their lethal grenades, by which time the Orks would be on top of them.

I was fairly sure Jake would anticipate my deployment but an Ork army's numerical superiority is always its greatest advantage and would hopefully swing the battle in my favour.

DEPLOYMENT MAP



ORK TURN 1

Warboss Grishnak squinted through his Mekboy kustom bigview glasses at the refinery spread out below him. Between the two main buildings lay the pile of crates that were his objective. Suddenly he caught sight of a movement behind the pipes and girders. Two Eldar War Walkers were taking up position, one facing his left flank and one in the centre guarding the approach to the crates. Warboss Grishnak looked about for the Warphead. "Where's da junk then? Is dat it?" the Warboss gestured vaguely in the direction of the crates. Behind him, the Warphead was visibly straining towards the front line, screaming incoherently whilst his four burly minders sat on him. "I'll take that as a 'yes'," smirked Grishnak.

The Warboss began bellowing orders. The Goffs to his left ducked behind a wall, safely hidden from the War Walker on the hill and its awesome firepower. The Bad Moons carrying heavy weapons moved into position against an outcrop of rock to cover the approach to the crates. In the centre, the Gretchin were herded towards the crates by the Goffs, who in turn began to run forward crouching low, their long arms trailing on the ground. The Goff mob fanned out, taking cover behind a number of boxes and oil drums. The Evil Sunz ran up behind the sewage outlet on the right, ready to cover the Goffs in the centre.

One of the Nobs leading the Goffs on the right activated the mass of wires, buttons and circuitry that made up his scanner. On its dim screen he pinpointed some scattered blips in the craters near the Death Skulls and yelled a warning. Squinting in the direction of the shellholes, several boyz spotted the vague shapes of Eldar Scouts who were hiding in the craters. The outlines of the Scouts were indistinct and blurred by their cameleoline camouflage and were very difficult to see but the boyz blazed away with their heavy weapons anyway. The heavy sound of bolter shells thudded into the lips of the craters, ricocheting wildly but to their disappointment there were no screams.

A glint of sunlight on metal caught the eye of one of the Death Skulls with an 'eavy bolta. A squad of Guardians were just visible partly concealed in a crater that used to be a building, so the Ork sprayed the plasteel with bolta-fire. Four of the Guardians were knocked from their feet by the impact of the heavy shells and sprawled dead on the ground. Stunned by the accuracy of the Ork's fire, the last of the sole survivor of the squad stood rooted to the spot.

Safely hidden behind the lines, the Warphead detected the malevolent psychic aura of his enemy – the Farseer. The Warphead focused his mind towards his foe, smashing him with *'Eadbutz* of pure Waaagh! power.

The Farseer took the blow of raw psychic power without faltering and summoned protective energies about himself to form a field of good *Fortune*. He staggered back as another wave of Ork power struck him. The Warphead had called on his Gods Mork and Gork to unleash the power of the *Waaagh!* upon the horde. As the wave of Orky power flooded the area

the chanting greenskins began to feel unbeatable, but the Farseer suffered no ill effects from the huge psychic power surge.

Projecting himself forward through the warp, glowing strands of energy streamed from the Farseer's outstretched fingertips. Slowly they wove themselves into a monstrous glowing form which materialised in the midst of the Ork advance. Two Gretchin at the head of the assault fell victim to the unstoppable attack of the *Executioner*, the Farseer's Eldar blade tasting his enemies' blood once more.

ORK TURN 1

The Farseer had waited patiently until the Warphead had exhausted his power to *Doom* the Weirdboy. Having found the thread of destiny that spelt destruction for the Warphead, the Farseer left him vulnerable to any assault from the rest of the army.

ORK TURN 1 VICTORY POINTS

ORKS 0 POINTS
ELDAR 0 POINTS

ELDAR TURN 1

ELDAR TURN 1

As the Ork horde began manoeuvring toward their objective, the Farseer began directing his forces in reply, closing the trap they had carefully laid. Firstly, the Dark Reapers climbed onto the rocky hill on the left flank to gain a good position to fire on the Orks. The Farseer himself advanced deliberately on the crates that were the Orks' goal and stood overlooking them, summoning force from the warp to energise his psychic powers. On his left the last remaining member of the badly mauled Guardian squad leant out from the cover of the ruins to snap off a shot at the advancing Goffs in an attempt to avenge his fallen comrades.

The Warlock and Guardians directly behind the silo ducked into cover behind its twin towers. The War Walker covering the crates remained in position, the crewman checking his weapon sights. On the Farseer's right the anti-grav platform carrying the scatter laser moved through the jungle, followed by the remaining Guardian squad. The heavy weapon's crewmen remained out of sight behind the cover of the trees.

On the right flank, the War Walker moved to the crest of the hill. The pilot was intent on killing as many of the Orks advancing across the battlefield as possible, as well as guarding against a flank attack. From behind him the Swooping Hawks took to the skies ready to attack next turn.

Once the forces had repositioned themselves, the return fire of the Eldar army began in earnest. The first Scout raised himself up out of his shellhole and threw a frag grenade towards the closest of the Evil Sunz moving forward in the open. It landed at the Ork's feet and exploded showering him with a thousand lethal pieces of metal. As the debris settled, the Ork lay dead but the rest of the Evil Sunz didn't waver, even when the crystallised poison from the Scouts' needle guns claimed another of their mob.

In the centre of the battlefield the area around the Ork objective became a killing zone. The combined fire of the scatter laser on the War Walker and the anti-grav platform lanced across the battlefield, cutting down seven Gretchin. The War Walker's crewman singled out a Goff for special treatment but his lascannon missed, smashing a gaping hole in an empty oil drum. Between the towering silos a single Guardian found a line of sight on a Goff and riddled him with a burst of shuriken. As the front line of the Ork advance fell, clutching at smouldering holes that pierced their writhing bodies, the Farseer calmly drew his ornate laspistol and shot down one more Gretchin. He waited for them to turn and run but the fearless creatures stubbornly advanced over the bodies of the first line.

The War Walker on the hill to the right of the Eldar line had carefully positioned himself where he could see the Evil Sun with the multi-melta. He adjusted the sights on the Scatter Laser to destroy the devastating weapon, and pressed the trigger. To the amusement of the Goffs, the War Walker's scatter laser *Malfunctioned* and blew up! As the smoke cleared the Eldar pilot narrowed his eyes and fired the Lascannon. A stream of brilliant energy briefly joined the War Walker and its target before slamming the Evil Sun carrying the multi-melta into the side of the sewer outlet. The Ork crashed to the ground, a massive, gaping hole in his chest.

The Farseer tapped into the power of the warp and tried to summon the force to send the *Destructor* carving a line of devastation through the enemy battleline. Feeling the force building, the Warphead exerted his will and with a tremendous effort he countered the attack.

The Farseer staggered as the Warphead *'Edbutted* him once more but managed to steady himself. As The Warphead tried to ward off the *Doom* that had been placed on him, the Eldar Warlock stored what force he could in his sword in preparation for the battle to come.

ELDAR TURN 1 VICTORY POINTS
ORKS 1 POINT
ELDAR 0 POINTS

ORK TURN 2

The Orks felt the power of *Waaagh!* flowing through them and threw caution to the wind. The Gretchin scampered forward to take the place of their fallen comrades and the Goffs advanced into firing positions against the Farseer who stood overlooking their objective.

Infuriated by the Scouts' attack on the Evil Sunz, the Death Skulls narrowed their beady eyes and took careful aim. The Evil Sunz, on the other hand, chose to ignore the Scouts. Their Nob yelled at his boyz to take cover behind the sewer outlet and cover the advancing Goffs. The Bad Moons with the autocannon and lascannon took careful aim at the War Walker,

whilst the remaining boyz opened fire on the Scouts.

In the centre of the Ork lines, Warboss Grishnak was feeling invincible. However, remembering the Swooping Hawks he had seen take to the skies a few moments before, he yelled, "Oi! Hide dat Warphead in da rocks. Those flyin' Eldar scum are up to sumfin' tricky". The Warphead began to shuffle towards the front line as fast as his minders would let him.

ORK TURN 2

The Death Skulls began once again to pump shells into the craters that concealed the Eldar Scouts. Steadying himself against a rock, the Ork carrying the heavy plasma gun fired into the midst of the craters and watched with glee as an unfortunate Scout vanished in a burst of incandescent energy. The Death Skull who had cleared the Guardians from their hiding place opened fire on the sole survivor but his aim was off. The War Walker and Farseer were also spared from damage despite the huge amount of bolter shells that exploded around their positions, ripping apart the crates that hid the Eldar commander.

The *Doomed* Warphead snarled and unleashed another *'Edbutz* at the Farseer. Saving his protective forces to nullify more lethal powers, the Farseer stood his ground and shrugged off the Ork's attack. In reply the Warlock released the power stored in his force sword and summoned an *Eldritch Storm*. As he focussed the power on the Ork's objective he felt the force draining away and the *Eldritch Storm* faded to nothing.

The Warphead's minders watched proudly as sparks began to fly around their charge. He had summoned the power of Gork himself in the form of *Da Krunch!* Across the battlefield the Farseer watched powerless as a huge green ectoplasmic foot descended from the skies. Before he could warn the Guardians, the foot had stamped down on the patch of jungle that concealed them, killing two of the warriors who failed to jump clear in time. As the foot faded away, the smashed remains of the anti-grav platform mounted scatter laser could also be seen. Under the steady gaze of the Farseer the remaining Guardians stood their ground.

ORK TURN 2 VICTORY POINTS
ORKS 2 POINTS
ELDAR 0 POINTS

The Eldar open fire as the Ork advance closes in.

ELDAR TURN 2

ELDAR TURN 2

Circling high above the battlefield the Swooping Hawks saw their chance. Diving down behind the Ork lines the valiant Aspect Warriors aimed straight for the *Doomed* Warphead.

As they touched down, the Swooping Hawk Exarch levelled his bulky lasblaster at the Warphead and gave the order to open fire. The squad loosed a hail of devastating beams of energy, killing one of the minders. The Exarch fired too, his triple barrelled lasblaster carving a swathe of death that cut down another minder and injured the Warphead himself. Despite only hitting the Ork psyker once, the *Doom* doubled the number of wounds leaving him close to death but still alive.

Meanwhile on the Eldar left, the Scouts turned their attention away from Evil Sunz and focused on the Death Skulls in an attempt to silence the Ork's heavy weapons. The Dark Reapers too began to pick their targets.

Behind the silos, the Guardian squad remained resolute. The survivors of the attack by *Da Krunch* advanced bravely in spite of the power of the Warphead. The Warlock on the left wisely drew back.

The Farseer and the War Walker behind him stood firm against the green tide whilst the damaged War Walker examined the Ork lines in an attempt to pinpoint either the Warboss or the Warphead.

Picking their targets calmly the Scouts killed both of the Death Skulls with heavy bolters. The Dark Reapers fired a storm of missiles amongst the Goffs who were caught in the open. The

Eldar Swooping Hawks make a surprise attack on the Warphead.

ground was torn apart by massive explosions that threw the Orks about like broken toys and as the smoke cleared three Goffs and a Nob lay dead, together with two Evil Sunz. Following their lead, the lone Guardian in the ruins tried to pick off some of the survivors but failed to wound anyone.

ORK TURN 3

In the centre, the survivors of the Guardian squads shot at the approaching wall of Orks, killing a Goff with their shuriken catapults. Then the War Walker covering the crates opened up. Three Goffs and two Gretchin fell to the ground clutching gaping wounds but the green tide continued to press forward. Through the milling Ork bodies on the right, the War Walker on the hill couldn't target the Warphead and picked out one of the Ork boyz to slay. With the Goff squarely in his sights of his lascannon the pilot fired, hitting the Ork and knocking him off his feet. As the Eldar pilot watched in astonishment, the Goff stood up, a little singed but miraculously alive!

Wary of the brute strength of the Warphead's psychic powers, the Eldar Farseer drew all the available force from the warp and earthed it through himself in a dazzling display of light. Robbed of the warp's energies, the Warphead once again failed in his attempt to unleash the *Waaagh!*

ELDAR TURN 2 VICTORY POINTS
ORKS 2 POINTS
ELDAR 2 POINTS

ORK TURN 3

Shaking with anger at the attack on the Warphead, Grishnak ordered the Bad Moons and Death Skulls to "ferget da Scouts and wipe out da flyin' scum". Grishnak and his faithful Gretchin standard bearer stood behind the two Bad Moons with the autocannon and lascannon to 'encourage' their aim. The Orks' front line continued its relentless advance towards their objective over the fallen bodies of their comrades. As they moved forwards they fired wildly at the Farseer who waited fearlessly for their charge.

As the remaining Minders carried the wounded Warphead away from trouble and closer to the front line, the Swooping Hawks were hit with bolter fire from all sides. The massed Bad Moons slew a single Swooping Hawk, his wings crumpling as the explosive rounds thudded into him. The Death Skulls' Nob fired a stream superheated metal from his plasma pistol and another Swooping Hawk died. The Eldar Aspect Warriors faced the gunfire coolly as the rest of the Death Skulls opened fire with their heavy bolters and cut down two more.

Bleeding heavily from his wounds, the Warphead began to course with energy once again, summoning again the power of *Da Krunch* to destroy the War Walker. Across the battlefield the Farseer felt the familiar energies building and and nullified the attack.

As he retaliated against the Warphead, a rift opened in the warp and a huge daemonic hand snatched at the Farseer. Concentrating his will, the Farseer hastily sealed the rift only to find himself under attack from the Warphead yet again.

Quickly evading the effects of the *'Edbutz* the Farseer projected himself through the warp to put an end to the psychic duelling. The Warphead's Minderz watched in horror as the ghostly form of the Eldar psyker appeared in front of them. Before they could react, the apparition raised its hand, beams of light stabbing out at their injured leader from the digital lasers.

Without waiting to see if the Ork psyker had survived, the Farseer's projection raised his mighty Executioner high and brought it down on his surprised foe. The Warphead was slain, gore splashing the surviving minderz as his bloody remains slid to the ground.

With its job done, the ghostly projection dissolved once more into glowing strands of mist leaving the Orks stunned. The Eldar had achieved their primary mission gaining a large lead in victory points and leaving the Orks with no psyker!

ORK TURN 3 VICTORY POINTS
ORKS 3 POINTS
ELDAR 8 POINTS

ELDAR TURN 3

ELDAR TURN 3

Casting his eyes upon his fallen comrades the Swooping Hawk Exarch and the remaining member of his squad soared back across the battlefield towards the Eldar lines. As they passed over the Warboss they both dropped frag grenades on him from their special packs. Though the grenades were both accurate, when the smoke from the explosions had cleared only one Goff and one Bad Moon had been killed. Warboss Grishnak and his Gretchin servant carrying his battle standard were both unhurt. As the last two Swooping Hawks landed they fired at the advancing Goffs killing another Ork. Over their heads flew the missiles from the Dark Reapers which landed amongst the Goffs killing another.

Safe in their shellholes, the Scouts' needlers spat more poisonous death at the Death Skulls facing them. Three more boyz fell but despite their losses the mob remained steady.

On the front line the bloodbath continued. Around the Orks' objective in the centre of the battlefield the bodies were piled high and still the Eldar created a maelstrom of death. Five more Gretchin fell to the combined fire of the Farseer and the Guardians. The War Walker laid down a withering hail of fire cutting to pieces four more of the Goffs.

The Farseer felt satisfied. The main threat to the Eldar, the Warphead, was dead. The Orks would have to face all of the Eldars' concentrated firepower and the Farseer knew the battle had turned. The Farseer tapped into the warp's energy, created a field of good *Fortune* around himself, and inwardly smiled.

ELDAR TURN 3 VICTORY POINTS
ORKS 3 POINT
ELDAR 10 POINTS

Ork heavy weapons boyz fight against the heavily camouflaged Eldar Scouts.

ORK TURN 4

Warboss Grishnak hesitated. Then, mounting a rocky outcrop, he bellowed the only answer to the bloody killing of his prized Warphead: "CHARGE!"

The Ork army readied itself then charged towards the enemy, surrounding the precious objective. The heavily depleted Evil Sunz pulled back from the front line as the remaining Death Skulls repositioned themselves for a final burst of gunfire. The Swooping Hawks were engulfed in dust as the Orks' heavy bolters tore up the ground at their feet. From his raised position Grishnak picked out the Farseer and fired his bolta-bolta wildly. The Orks' luck had gone completely and every shot they fired missed.

Suddenly the lead Gretchin saw a flash of light and next second fell to the ground in two halves. The Farseer had struck once more, *Executing* the hapless Gretchin. The tattered remains of the Gretchin mob snarled, but the Farseer was powerless to continue his assault for the moment. The Goffs braced themselves to meet the furious assault the last turn would surely bring.

ORK TURN 4 VICTORY POINTS
ORKS 3 POINTS
ELDAR 10 POINTS

ORK TURN 4

ELDAR TURN 4

The Farseer quickly assessed the situation. The Ork charge had to be beaten back. He gave a few simple instructions on the commlink and the Eldar took up positions for the final firefight.

Behind the Ork lines the Scouts once again turned their attention to the Evil Sunz and killed two more but failed to break the resolve of the remaining boyz. The Dark Reapers again only manage to kill one of the Goffs as their missiles either failed to explode or deviated wildly off course.

The Guardians and War Walker in turn fired mercilessly on the Orks who were already overturning and ransacking the crates in a last ditch effort to get to the supplies. The combined hail of shuriken discs and intense energy beams cut down the last two Gretchin and four more Goffs. On the left of the massed horde stood the Swooping Hawk Exarch

ELDAR TURN 4

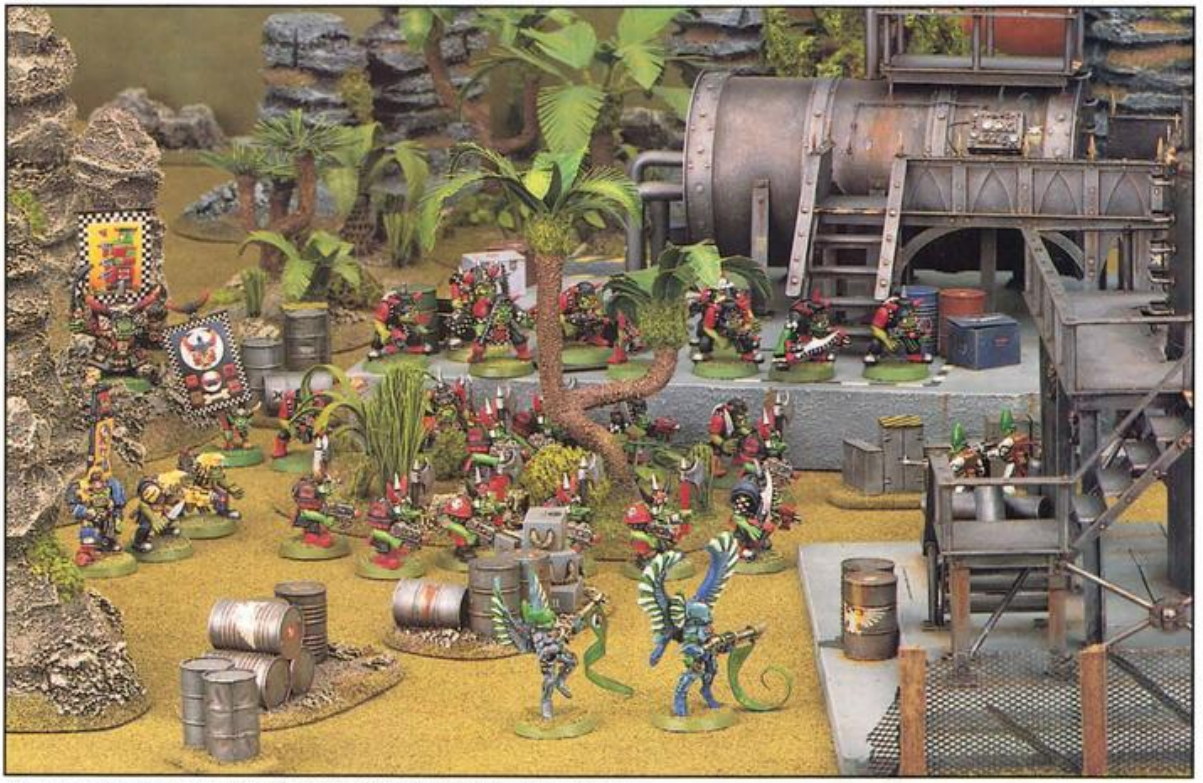
The Farseer was pleased. He summoned all his power to unleash the *Destructor* on the Ork army to complete the slaughter but the warp proved fickle and the power dissipated. As the Orks began to retreat the Farseer sent one last *Executioner* and bloodily dispatched one more Goff.

and his remaining trooper. They too joined in the carnage with their lasgun and blaster, spraying the Goffs with laser energy and killing two more Orks.

The damaged War Walker on the crest of the hill spied the Warboss who was screaming oaths and firing his gun wildly in the air. A single blast of power shot across the battlefield and struck the Warboss full force. The Ork completely disappeared only to reappear a few feet away, saved from death by his displacer field.

The Farseer strode over to the last intact crate. He forced the lid open with the ornate butt of his laspistol and gazed on its contents.

ORK TURN 4 VICTORY POINTS
ORKS 3 POINTS
ELDAR 11 POINTS



The surviving Swooping Hawks fire into the flank of the Ork advance.

The Ork horde swarms over its objective in its final turn

ELDAR CONCLUSION

When the battle smoke had cleared the Orks had gone leaving only the bodies of their fallen comrades. Amongst the corpses lay the dead Warphead, slain by my Farseer.

True to form the Orcs had adopted their simple tactic of going for the objective at all costs. It very nearly worked. On my last turn I managed to kill all the Orks within three inches of their objective but only just. One or two unlucky dice rolls and I would have been stuck.

My plan to funnel the Orks into a killing zone by firing on them from both sides worked perfectly, the only problem was that two of my scatter lasers were destroyed and I had been relying on these to cause lots of damage. As it was, the War Walker that survived unscathed had killed sixteen Orks and Gretchin by the end of the battle. If Adrian hadn't destroyed the others then none of the Orks would have escaped alive.

My Farseer spent most of the battle right at the front in a rather brave attempt to extend the effective range of his devastating power *Executioner*. This gamble paid off handsomely when he killed the Warphead with it in turn three. As it was the Warphead was only half an inch inside the maximum range of the power but that was close enough.

It is always harder to learn from victories than losses because it's so easy to pat yourself on the back at your brilliant strategy and gloat over your enemy's mistakes. In general though I think that my plan worked fairly well and Adrian became so wrapped up in taking the objective at all costs that he didn't have time to exploit the inherent weaknesses of my set up.

On the Orks' side I think that Adrian's main fault was in following my plan for his army, and converging on his objective. If he had advanced on the same width as he had deployed, then I would have been forced to take some of the Eldar defending the centre and place them on the flanks or risk being completely overrun. Any squads he sent around the sides of the buildings to attack my flanks wouldn't have been able to capture the Orks' objective themselves, but they would have been greatly helping the whole army by drawing fire away from those who could.

All in all this was an exciting game greatly enhanced by the excellent new psychic rules from Dark Millennium.

ORK CONCLUSION

Whoever came up with the brilliant Strategy should be taken out and shot!

I feel that the game could have gone either way up until the middle of turn three. I can definitely see a pattern of opportunities that were presented to me which were double-edged swords. First let's take the Strategy cards I picked. *Brilliant Strategy* gave me the opportunity to move first. This was too good a chance for an Ork player to resist because Orks nearly always move second. However, given that my mission

was *Take and Hold* I would have been better moving after the Eldar as this gives the Orks a last turn advantage to jump on an objective or take more enemy down without fear of reprisal (apart from overwatch of course). This clearly shows that it can be more strategic not to play a strategy card rather than just blindly use the card for the sake of it.

Certainly *Malfunction* was extremely handy to pick as it actually gained me a victory point for damaging a War Walker without firing a shot. In hindsight I may have been hasty in using it on the first War Walker that opened fire rather than waiting to use it on the War Walker in the centre which commanded the area around my objective and was more of a long term threat.

I had deployed the Orks very close together and they would have been a perfect target for frag missiles if there had been any that could see them. I guessed that the Dark Reapers wouldn't be able to get into a firing position for a turn and unless Jake had an area effect strategy card such as *Barrage* or *Virus Outbreak* I was safe. By the time Jake's missile launchers could see my mobs they were safely dispersed.

As the game progressed I focused too much on swamping the objective with Orks rather than threatening Jake's forces as a whole by moving the Orks forward as they were deployed. If I had done this, my huge Ork line converging on the thin Eldar line would have caused Jake to spread his fire across the battle front instead of concentrating it on one point. Also, when Jake finally opened fire on the Goffs on my right I halted their advance and moved towards my objective. I should have ignored the missiles as I usually do in favour of threatening a squad of Guardians that I could easily have hacked to pieces in hand-to-hand combat.

All the heavy weapons had less line of sight than I had anticipated. The Death Skulls were probably the worst placed of my heavy weapons and should have been deployed on the hill to the right of my main line in much the same way as the Dark Reapers were positioned. A screen of Gretchin would have protected them from harm.

Up until turn three the game was going very much to my original plan. The Gretchin were a walking shield and quite rightly so. The Goffs were converging on the objective from both sides. Although the Swooping Hawks had wounded the Warphead they suffered for it and he was still on his feet. In many respects I should have swopped the positions of the Warphead and the Warboss at this point. This would have denied the Swooping Hawks a line of sight to shoot him again without placing him too near the front line. I usually like to keep the Warboss out of harm's way but there was plenty of cover for him to hide behind and plenty of boyz who would sell themselves dearly for their exalted leader.

The Warphead exhibited low Orkish cunning by picking off Jake's scatter laser which was causing so much trouble to my advance. The War Walker at the objective was his next target. As well as this, he kept throwing *'Edbutz* at the Farseer or knocking him down with *Waaagh!* and this kept him on his toes. In fact the Farseer was becoming my target for the battle. It was in the middle of summoning the power of the Waaagh! that he was cut down by the Farseer's *Executioner*.

I realise now that the greatest flaw in my plan was simply the reliance on the Warphead to achieve victory. He is one the most powerful characters in Warhammer 40,000, certainly as far as psykers are concerned. Whilst he was alive I felt in control. Once I realised how much my heavy weapons were tied up by lack of clear lines of sight the Warphead became my support weapon for the battle. My plan to use him to destroy all the most potent of the Eldar weapons ie: the scatter lasers, and therefore allow the Orks numbers to swamp the objective was certainly valid. However, as killing the Warphead was Jake's mission, moving close enough to be in a position to *Krunch* the enemy was very risky as I found out to my cost. With his death I was confused as to how to continue. Also, I was too caught up in the heat of battle to think straight and pick my targets carefully. This is a particularly easy mistake to make with the Orks as there are so many models to think about.

Jake's basic battle plan was fine and as predictable as mine was. He certainly achieved his objective. His deployment on the flanks was perfect but my only criticism was that his set up in the centre was a little unsure. It would have made sense to place the scatter laser on the anti-grav platform to the left of the Farseer rather than the right. The pipes and hard cover here would have proved more effective protection than the trees as well as being out of range of *Da Krunch*. Also, the squad of Guardians who were killed by the heavy bolter whilst in hard cover may have been better kept in reserve behind the silos with the other Guardians. I personally would have taken a second squad of Dark Reapers in preference to all the Guardians, but considering the missions we could have picked Jake may have thought them too costly.

Having learned from this battle I am now making good use of Warbikes and Scorchers to overcome the Orks' lack of manoeuvrability and really take the battle to the enemy. Also, the new shokk attack gun rules which are being tested at the moment for the Ork Codex have proved very effective. It is not the only good support weapon being tested either. I am also making use of an extra Weirdboy as back up should the Warphead be killed. My general rule for an Ork army is that everything counts in large amounts!

The Orks are a brilliant army to stretch your tactical knowledge and gaming skills. Although their tactics are never subtle, an Ork force is neither a simple nor straightforward army to use. I have heard it said that no one won a gun fight by being a crack shot. It was always the man who kept his head, picked the right targets in the right order and was coolest under fire who emerged triumphant. In Warhammer 40,000 this is certainly a skill to be developed.

WARHAMMER 40,000®

DAWN RAID

By Jervis Johnson and Jake Thornton

Ork and Imperial forces clash in a struggle to the death as Ghazghkull Thraka leads his Ork horde in a raid against the heavily outnumbered Space Marines of the Ultramarines Chapter.

Endless tracts of steaming jungle disappeared into the heat haze, the solid green mass broken only by the winding scars of rivers and streams. The exotic cries of brightly coloured birds rang through the verdant sprawl as they flew from tree to tree. Countless creatures scuttled and scurried through the branches of the tangled canopy. Everything was surrounded by a constant droning mist of insects.

Above this, on a pinnacle of rock, stood the Ultramarines Commander. For hours he had stood, silently scanning the horizon. Finally he spoke: "They are coming," he said. His troopers instantly snapped to attention, reflexively checking their bolters and heavy weapons. They all knew that everything depended on stopping the Ork advance.

With a crash of splintering timber the Dreadnought tore another tree from its path and lumbered off through the jungle once more. The Goff Boyz cheered as it lumbered forward and followed down the trail of smashed undergrowth and despoiled plant-life, pausing only to fire a few bolter shells at the small, furry creatures which scuttled out of their path.

Boarboyz charged up and down the slowly moving line of Orks, barely containing their frustration at being stuck in the dense jungle. The Orks' mounts grunted and squealed madly as their riders hacked at the overhanging branches. The bikers too added to the uproar, revving their engines irritably, frantic for an open space where they could put their foot down and roar off. Going slowly was completely unnatural for a Speed Freek.

Slowly the advance trudged on with the Orks following the trail blazed by their Dreadnought. They amused themselves shooting at passing creatures and it was fun destroying things, but the Boyz were becoming restless at the lack of proper opponents.

"We didunt join da Waaagh to shoot no trees," grumbled one.

"Or fight 'and-ter-'and wif da 'skeetos," said another.

Ghazghkull kept them in line, clipping ears and putting in the boot when any of the Boyz grumbled too loudly, but it was clear that they would need some luck soon.

Suddenly, the leading mob broke out of the dappled jungle into the bright sunlight of a clearing. As the Orks stood and blinked in the sudden bright light they saw a small, shallow stream winding through the tangle of green – the perfect road for them to advance down.

With shouts of glee the Speed Freeks gunned the engines of their buggies and bikes and roared off down the stream sending up sheets of spray on either side. This was the life: a fast buggy, bright new red paint job and an open road – even if it was a bit damp.

As the second of the twin suns rose, the Orks saw the Space Marines' position.

"CHARGE" yelled Ghazghkull, and the Boyz broke into a run, their battle-chants echoing through the forest and drowning out the birdsong.

"'Ere we go, 'ere we go, 'ere we go."

INTRODUCTION

For the past few weeks the power of the Waaagh has been growing in the Studio as battle after battle was fought to test the new Ork Codex. Games have been won and lost as the rules were refined ready for release. Now with the Codex complete, we decided to take the opportunity to fight with the revised Ork army against one of their oldest adversaries – the Space Marines. The battle that follows shows the awesome strength of the Orks who are one of the most powerful armies in the forty-first millennium.

As with all the games of Warhammer 40,000 we play at the Studio, we used the rules from the Dark Millennium supplement. Jervis used the new army list from the Ork Codex to calculate his army, whilst Jake used the Codex Army Lists from the basic game for the Ultramarines.

We set up this game on one of the Studio's eight foot by four foot gaming tables and kept notes as we played. Because it is very difficult to take high quality photographs in the middle of the battle, we just took snapshots of each turn. After the battle was over, we used these photographs along with the maps we had made during the game to recreate the battle and set it up with proper lighting and camera equipment.

When we made the map we reduced the eight by four table to a six by four. This mainly involved leaving out the extreme flanks which neither force used during the battle and so the maps shown don't distort what actually happened. The only point to make about this is that we did set up in our deployment zones as it says in the rules, even though the space outside isn't all shown on the map.

ULTRAMARINES INTRODUCTION

(Jake Thornton)

This battle was my first against an Ork army chosen from the new Ork Codex. I've shot up the Orks in a number of previous games and learnt to respect their numbers if not their skills which so often let them down. Jervis has changed all that with the addition of some new troop types and a number of weapons that bypass the Orks' normal inability to hit a barn door at ten paces. Luckily I would be spared the full horror of the revitalised Orks as the 'Eavy Metal team hadn't finished painting up the new Blood Axe Kommandos, Deathskull Lootas and Pulsa Rokkits yet. Still, it looked like being a very different game.

I decided to take the Ultramarines as they had recently been reinforced with the Razorback. This would give me a chance to blood this new war machine against an old enemy. I decided not to take any other vehicles as I expected that my main problem in fighting the Orks would be the same as usual – killing the Boyz fast enough. Space Marines are excellent troops of the highest quality, unfortunately you never have enough of them and are in constant danger of being overrun. This problem is particularly bad when you are fighting the Orks who have very large armies including a lot of models with Toughness 4. On top of this the Orks usually advance behind a screen of Gretchin who have to be shot away before you can even begin to damage their more important troops.

With any reasonable sized army I like to take one 4th level psyker and another lower level "backup psyker". Unfortunately, the Ultramarines army at the Studio doesn't include any psykers yet, so I borrowed a Chief Librarian from the Blood Angels and took a second level Psyker Champion of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica. Having more than one psyker on your own side has two main advantages. Firstly, if one dies then you still have another left to carry on the fight. Secondly, if you manage to kill all of the opposing psykers then you can still roll 2D6 for the warp flux.

As I didn't know what mission I would be fighting I decided to take one each of the Tactical, Assault and Devastator squads. This would hopefully give me the flexibility to complete my objective regardless of which card I drew. I decided to keep the Tactical and Assault squads as ten-man squads but split the Devastators into two five-man battle squads. This would enable me to split the fire of my heavy weapons whilst leaving my Tactical and Assault squads with enough men to avoid being swamped by the Orks in hand-to-hand combat. With a force of thirty troopers, three characters and a vehicle, all my points were now spent.

When I actually saw Jervis' army I was rather surprised. There was no Warphead and there were lots of vehicles. I would therefore have something of an advantage in the psychic phase but would be hard pressed to deal with all the buggies and bikes before they were in amongst my men.

Having picked our armies, Jervis and I set up the terrain and picked our missions. Jervis got the typically Orky *Dawn Raid* and I drew *The Assassins*. We then rolled for the game length and came up with a short game of only three turns. Normally we play four turn games and this result had both advantages and disadvantages for me. On the plus side, only Jervis' vehicles, Boarboyz and Nobz mob riding in the Battlewagon could actually move far enough to get into my deployment zone and complete his mission. On the minus side, killing Ghazghkull looked almost impossible. It would take at least one turn to actually get anyone to him, his power of the Waaagh would make him undamagable for another, and so out of the three turns I might get a single chance to hit him! Of course, Jervis would also be doing his best to keep Ghazghkull well out of harm's way. In the end I decided that sending my Assault squad or Commander after Ghazghkull was too risky and that I would have a better chance of winning if I concentrated on killing Orks and stopping Jervis from achieving his objective.

We then diced for sides, I won the roll and decided to take the more open deployment zone. Although this left Jervis with the best cover, he would advance out of it almost immediately on his *Dawn Raid* so it wouldn't do him much good. This also left me with lots of clear lanes of fire to shoot up any Orks that did make it into my deployment zone in the last turn.

Jervis set up his Orks first with most of the fast mobs on his left. Facing these I placed my Devastator battle squads on either side of the river down which I expected the main attack to come. My Commander stood behind the more central of these and the Razorback sat squarely in front of the Ork's Battlewagon. The Devastators with my Commander set up hidden in the jungle so that they wouldn't be shot at if the Orks moved first. With them was my Psyker Champion whose devastating *Lightning Arc* could be expected to cause havoc amongst the advancing Ork wave. I intended these troops to stop the main Ork attack with their heavy weapons.

Towards the left of the central open area I placed my Tactical squad on a hill where they would have a good view of the central Ork advance. This squad would fire on the central mass of Ork Boyz and act as a sort of reserve unit. To their left was my Assault squad, ready to attack Jervis' field artillery and Deathskulls mob. Between these two squads I placed my Chief Librarian. He had the psychic power *Gate* and from this position he would be able to redeploy either squad to cover the greatest threat.

ULTRAMARINES ARMY
(2000 Points)

SPACE MARINE COMMANDER

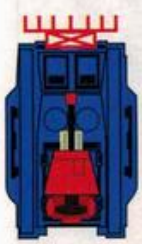
Commander equipped with power sword, plasma pistol, blind grenades, melta bombs *Displacer Field*, power armour, *Combat drugs* and *Aegis suit*.

TECHMARINE

Techmarine equipped with bolt pistol and power armour.

ADEPTUS ASTRA TELEPATHICA

Psyker Champion with displacer field, autogun and *Force Rod*.



RAZORBACK

Vehicle with a *Null Shield* and additional auto-launchers loaded with frag grenades.

TACTICAL SQUAD

10 Space Marines equipped with bolters, power armour and krak grenades. The **Veteran Sergeant** carries a chainsword. One model is equipped with a heavy bolter and another carries a melta gun.

ASSAULT SQUAD

10 Space Marines with bolt pistols, power armour, jump packs and various assault weapons. The **Veteran Sergeant** has a power fist.

TWO DEVASTATOR SQUADS

Each containing **5 Space Marines** equipped with heavy weapons. They are led by a **Veteran Sergeant**.

LIBRARIAN

Chief Librarian with bolt pistol, power armour, displacer field, frag and blind grenades, melta bombs, *Scanner*, *Force Sword* and *Psychic Hood*.

CHOOSING THE ORK ARMY

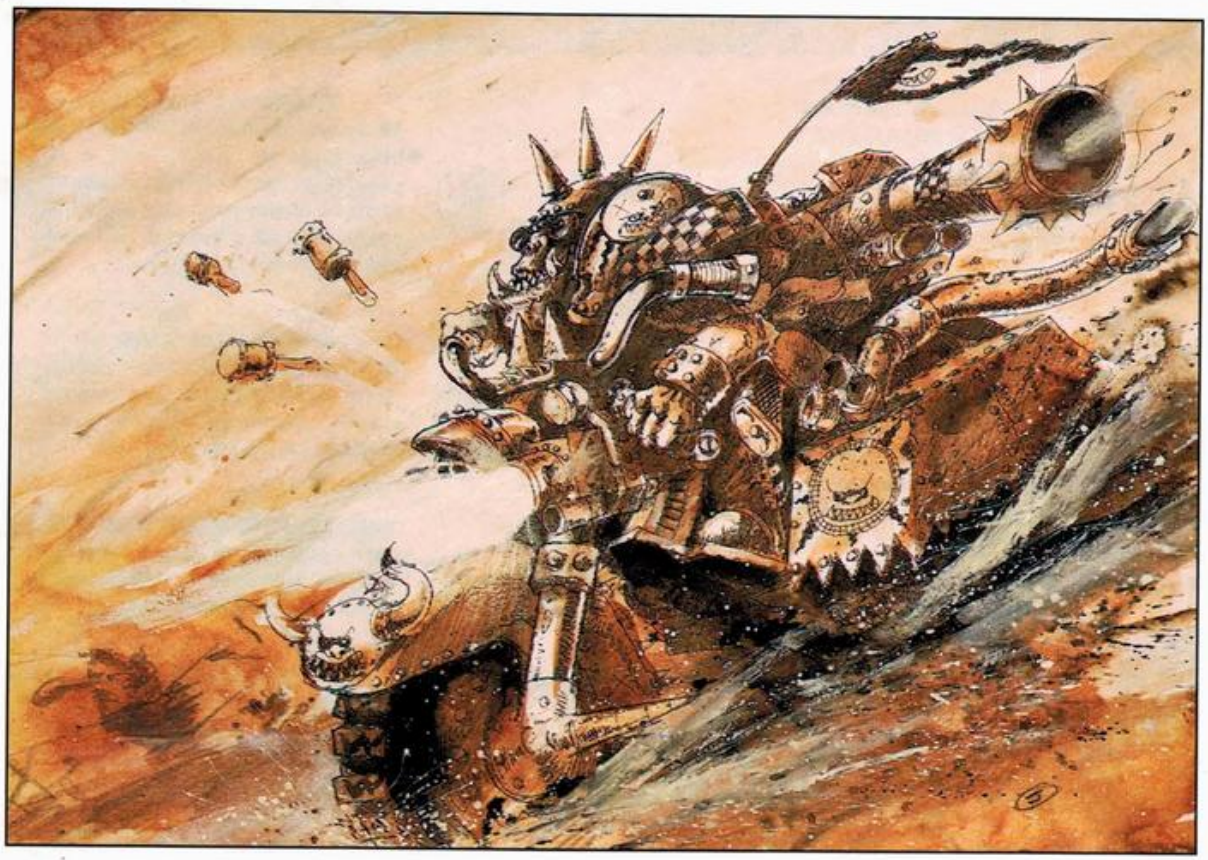
(Jervis Johnson)

Ork warbands can be immensely effective armies, but they must be chosen with care. While a Space Marine player can do very well by simply using his flexible and highly effective basic troop types, the warriors in an Ork warband are very specialised and need to be used in combination in order to be effective.

There are three basic types of Ork troops. First of all there are da Boyz who comprise of all the big mobs of foot troops who engage the enemy close up, like Nobz mobs, most Boyz mobs, Madboyz, Stormboyz, Gretchin and Ogryns. Next there are da Buggies, which includes all the various different type of Ork wheeled and tracked vehicles like warbikes, buggies, scorchers. Finally there are da Big Gunz, which includes all the Orks' field artillery, Shokk Attack Guns and any other troops with long ranged weapons such as Deathskulls armed with heavy weapons. Dreadnoughts are a special case because they can either be used as part of the Boyz and go and get stuck in, or as part of da Big Gunz, providing long range support. Any Boarboyz in the army fit into the Buggies category because, although they aren't vehicles as such, they are used in the same way.

In order to be effective, an Ork warband normally needs to include all three of these troop types. At a pinch you can get by with two, but you'll find life very difficult with only one. The proportion of each troop type you pick depends very largely on personal preference and the type of tactics you like to use. When I choose an army, I take as many Buggies and Big Gunz as I can, and then I make up the numbers with a horde of cheaper Boyz. Andy Chambers, on the other hand, likes to use lots of well equipped Boyz and relegates the Buggies and Big Gunz to a secondary role.

With regard to exactly which models to pick, there are very few hard and fast rules. The only thing I would always take is a Battle Standard. The re-roll the Battle Standard provides on all Leadership tests made within a 12" radius is extremely useful in an Ork army, which has quite a few units with a Ld of 7, and sometimes even less! The actual army I have chosen is listed opposite and most of the choices I have made are fairly obvious. However you should note the large size of the Gretchin and Goff boyz mobs. Assault troops like these need to be in large mobs, otherwise it will be easy for your opponent to cause 25% casualties in a single turn and force a panic test which (if you fail it) will mean that they take little or no part in the battle. Large mobs can generally soak up a couple of turns of fire without taking any leadership tests, by which time they will hopefully be close enough to the enemy to charge into close combat or start shooting back!



ORK ARMY
(2000 Points)

DA BOYZ

WARBOSS
Ghazghkull Thrakka and Gretchin Battle Standard bearer **Makari**.

WEIRDBOY
Bad Moon **Weirdboy** with two Minderz.

RUNTHERD
Zodgrod Wortsnagga.

SUPER GRETCHIN
20 Super Gretchin equipped with autoguns.

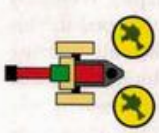
GOFF MOB
14 Boyz and **1 Nob**.

SNAKEBITE MOB
6 Boyz led by a **Nob** in 'Eavy armour.

PAINBOY
Painboy with a *Vaccine Squig*.

DREADNOUGHT
with a lascannon, missile launcher and 2 power claws.

DA BIG GUNZ



SPLATTA GUN
with 2 **Gretchin** crew.

BUZZER SQUIGS

SQUIG KATAPULT
with 2 **Gretchin** crew.

DEATHSKULLS MOB
8 Boyz with heavy weapons led by a **Nob**.

MEKANIAK
Mekaniak with Shokk Attack Gun.

RUNTHERD
Runtherd with 7 Snotling bases.

DA BUGGIES

WARBIKE
Warbike with twin autocannons.

WAR BUGGY
Warbuggy with melta gun.

WARTRAK
Warbike with lascannon.

BIGBOSS
Snakebite Bigboss on cyboar with *Kustom Blasta*.

BOARBOYZ
6 Snakebite Boarboyz led by a **Nob** in 'Eavy armour.

BATTLEWAGON
5 Goff Nobz riding a battlewagon.

DA PLAN

The mission I drew was *Dawn Raid* which meant that I had to get a mob at over half strength or an undamaged vehicle into the Space Marines' deployment area. What's more, I'd only got 3 turns in which to achieve this objective (we decided to roll a dice to see how long the battle was rather than take the standard game length of 4 turns, and the dice roll was a '1' which resulted in a three turn battle).

This made an already difficult task very hard indeed, because with only three turns of movement my foot troopers couldn't possibly reach the Space Marine's deployment area, which was 24" from my deployment area, even if they ran for all three turns! Fortunately I did have the Snakebite Boarboyz, as well as a squadron of light vehicles and the Battlewagon with the Goff Nobz mob in it, all of which had the speed to get across the table in the time that I have available. This pretty much dictated my plan – my fast troops would rush across the table while the rest of the army did their best to support them by drawing enemy fire and blasting away at any Space Marines they could see.

Before I set-up, however, I had to draw my Strategy cards as there was a chance that they would affect the set-up. I drew *Virus Outbreak* and *Craven Cowardice*, both of which were of limited use against a Space Marine army. In fact there was only one model in Jake's army that could be affected by the Virus (the Adeptus Psyker who isn't wearing power armour), but that was better than none at all! *Craven Cowardice* could be useful if any Space Marine squads failed a break test, as it would force them to flee rather than become shaken, but unfortunately Space Marines failing a leadership test is hardly something I can rely on happening. All in all then the Strategy cards I had drawn had very little affect on my game plan or deployment.

My deployment is shown on the accompanying map. As you can see, I massed the Boarboyz, Battlewagon plus Nobz, and vehicle squadron on my left flank. This was so they could roar up the shallow river which had the advantage of being covered on either flank by the trees on the river banks. Hopefully this would cut down the amount of Space Marine fire my vehicles took as they tried to get across the table, while at the same time giving them a fairly clear and straight route to the Space Marines' deployment zone.

Next to my fast troops I placed the Goff Boyz, the Gretchin and the Dreadnought. I deployed the Gretchin in a long skirmish line so that the Space Marines would have to fire at them, rather than the more valuable Ork troops behind them (as you know, the Warhammer 40,000 rules force a model to shoot at the closest available target, which is very handy for the Orks because it allows them to screen valuable troops with cheaper more expendable ones). These troops would run towards the Space Marines for the first couple of turns in an attempt to close with the Space Marines and either engage them in hand to hand combat or shoot from close range. I've learnt through bitter experience not to slow an Ork advance just to get off a few shots at long range, as they will only miss and the Orks will not end up close enough to the enemy to do any serious damage before the game is over. The Dreadnought is included with the Boyz to provide them with a bit of supporting fire and because it is awesome if it gets the chance to enter close combat!

Just behind this horde was my 'command group' consisting of Ghazghkull, Makari, Zodgrod Wortsnaga and a Painboy. Normally I would consider putting one or more of these models in the Battlewagon with the Nobz, but because the Space Marines mission is to assassinate Ghazghkull I want to try to keep him a reasonable distance away from the enemy, and provide a good enough bodyguard for him if he does come under attack.

On my right flank I stationed my most 'shooty' troops: the Shokk Attack Gun, Splatta Kannon, Squig Katapult, Weirdboy and Deathskulls. The fields of fire were pretty good on this flank, and I hoped that these troops would be able to bring down a withering hail of fire on any Space Marines stationed opposite them. It's important to mass Ork firepower in this way as many of the weapons aren't very reliable, and so you need to get as many things shooting at a target as possible in order to do any serious damage. Note that the Squig Katapult was placed out of sight behind a building, as it doesn't require a line of sight in order to attack. I also placed the Snakebite Boyz who are on foot on this flank, to provide a bit of supporting fire and close combat 'muscle' in case the Space Marines decide to try to overrun this position.

DEPLOYMENT

ORK TURN 1

ORK TURN ONE

Possible the single most important addition in the Ork Codex is the new rule that allows the Orks to double their strategy rating when rolling to see who gets the first turn (they use their unmodified strategy rating to see who sets up first). This bumps the Orks strategy rating from 3 to 6, which ensures that more often than not the Orks will move first in a battle. For this all-important dice roll Jake rolled a 3 plus his strategy rating of 5, for a total of 8, while I rolled a 4 plus my doubled strategy rating of 6 which gave me a total of 10 and the first turn. Note that without this modification I'd have got a total of 3+4=7, so I would have moved second.

Before I moved any of my units, I played my *Virus Outbreak* strategy card against the Adeptus Psyker, who rather satisfyingly keeled over stone-cold dead! This was extremely good news, and meant that I was 1 victory point up without a shot being fired or a model moved!

Obviously inspired by this turn of events the Ork army surged forward. On the left flank the Battlewagon splashed straight up the stream (we had previously decided that it would be a very shallow stream which would have no adverse effect on movement), supported by the vehicle squadron on one side and the Boarboyz on the other. In the centre the Gretchin, Goff Boyz, and Ghazghkull plus his bodyguard ran forward as quickly as they could, while the Dreadnought went forward at a more leisurely pace so that it could fire in the ensuing shooting phase. On the right the Snakebite and Deathskull Boyz went into overwatch so that they could fire at any Space Marines that moved into the open during the Space Marine turn (all of the Space Marines on the right flank were hidden from sight at the start of the battle), while the Weirdboy ran forward to take cover behind the large building directly in front of him.

Because most of the Space Marines were hidden there were only a couple of targets that I could fire at, namely the Razorback and the Devastator Battle Squad on top of the hill by the river. I decided to shoot the Wartrak and the lascannon on the Dreadnought at the Razorback, while the Shokk Attack gun, the Warbike and the Dreadnought's missile launcher fired at the Devastators. This hail of fire killed the Techmarine, reduced the Devastators to a single model armed with a missile launcher and blew off one of the Razorback's tracks, sending it out of control. Unfortunately the surviving Devastator passed the leadership test for his squad suffering more than 25% casualties, otherwise I could have played my *Craven Cowardice* card and forced him to flee.

Meanwhile the Splatta Kannon and Squig Katapult opened up on the hidden Space Marines (neither of these weapons needs a line of sight in order to fire). The Splatta Kannon failed to cause any damage, but the Katapult landed a Squig pot right on the head of an unlucky Assault Marine who was promptly devoured by the swarm of angry buzzer squigs!

In the Psychic Phase my Weirdboy managed to pass his Waaagh test and even gained an extra warp card which gave him just enough power to unleash a *Death Wave* at the Librarian. Unfortunately, it didn't quite reach the target and so failed to inflict any damage. Pausing only to store a force card in his force sword, the Librarian used the *Assail* power to drag the Weirdboy out of cover into the open where he was almost certain to get blown to bits in the Space Marines' shooting phase...

ULTRAMARINES TURN 1

With the Razorback's track shot away it careered out of control and crashed into the edge of a patch of jungle. It was totally immobilised, but luckily its guns were still working. My Devastators had been badly mauled but stood their ground ready to fire on the approaching Orks. In the centre, I moved the Tactical squad to the brow of the hill from where they could see the Deathskulls and field artillery as well as the Gretchin to their right. On my left, the Assault squad's jump packs didn't have the range to go over the buildings and they were forced to advance on foot instead.

Before I was able to fire a shot, Jervis opened fire with his overwatching Snakebites and Deathskulls at my advancing troops. Luckily for me, all of this mass of heavily armed Orks proved to be either out of range or simply inaccurate.

I began my firing with the sole survivor of the Devastators on my extreme right. With the damaged Razorback blocking his line of sight to either the Battlewagon or the bikes, he chose the Dreadnought as his target. True to form, the Space Marine was on target and the krak missile smashed into the Ork machine tearing its lascannon from its mount and leaving a smoking tangle of wires.

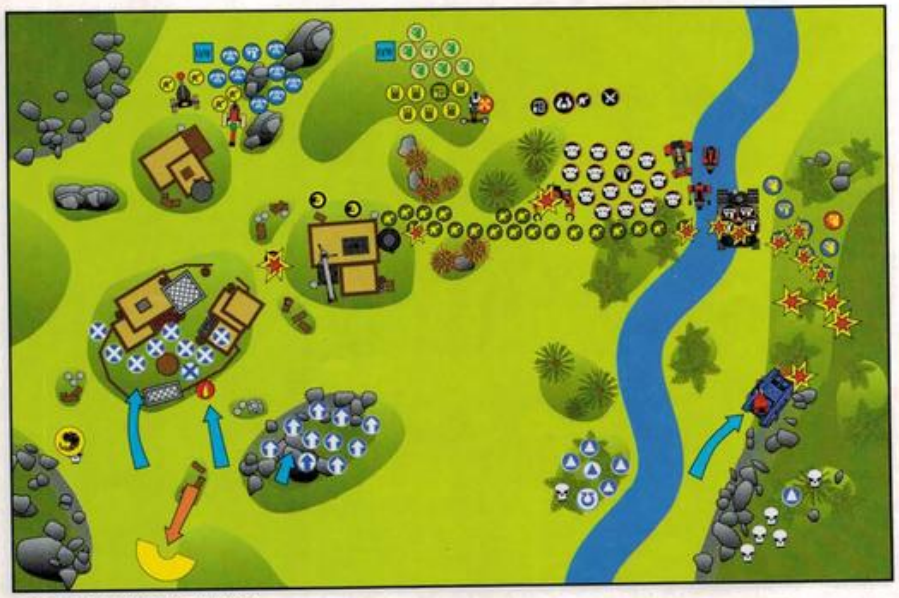
An Ultramarines Razorback and Devastator squads clash with advancing Orks.

My second Devastator squad emerged from hiding and opened fire at the Battlewagon. The shot was accurate but instead of tearing the vehicle apart it merely killed one of the Nobz riding it. The heavy bolter fired at the Boarboyz who were beginning their outflanking move hitting them six times and scoring five wounds, but their Nob and one Ork were saved by their armour. One of the troopers guarding the heavy weapons dispatched a Gretchin with his boltgun fire.

One of the Tactical squad killed another Gretchin, but the main target of their fire was the Ork Weirdboy who had been dragged kicking and screaming out of cover by the Librarian's *Assail*. Standing alone in the open, the bewildered Ork was cut to ribbons by the massed fire of the Ultramarines.

Despite being badly damaged, the Razorback's turret was still functional and opened fire at the nearest Ork vehicle. The shot struck the battlewagon but again the lascannon hit one of the passengers leaving the vehicle itself undamaged. The Nobz onboard easily passed their leadership test for the casualty. To complete the shot I rolled for the plasma gun and got two hits. I allocated one to the battlewagon in the hope of hitting the Nobz again and taking them over 50% casualties. Needless to say I hit the hull this time and bounced off its massively thick armour plating. The last hit I allocated to one of the Boarboyz who was blasted him from his saddle by the super-heated charge.

In the psychic phase I rolled one dice as the only psyker left was my Librarian. Jervis rolled for the *Death Wave* which passed safely through the gap I had made in my ranks. The only power I tried to use was my Librarian's attempt to use *Quickening* on himself which Jervis nullified with a 6!

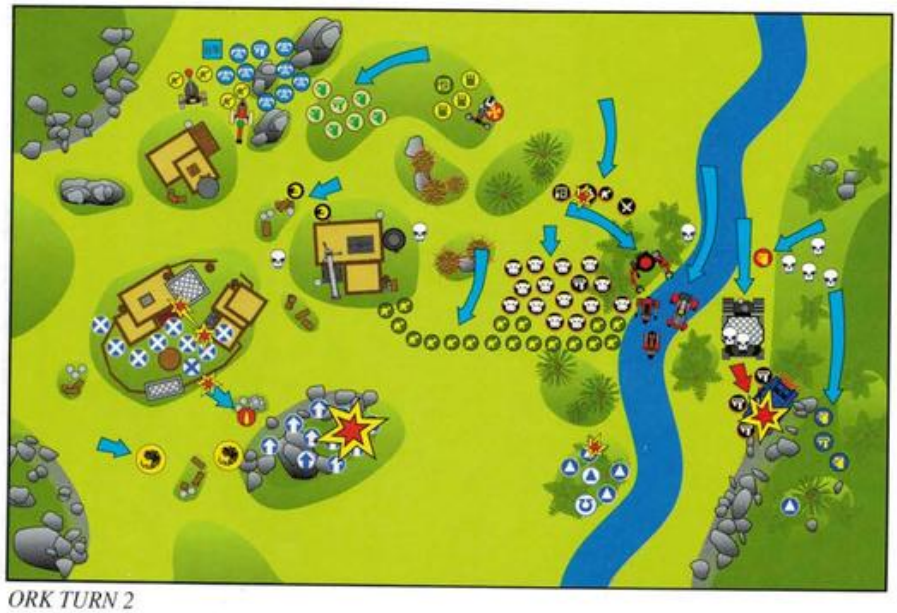


ULTRAMARINES TURN 1

Ork field artillery and Deathskulls' heavy weapons halt the Ultramarines' attack.

ORK TURN TWO

On the whole I had got off rather lightly during the Space Marine turn, the only exception being the extremely accurate heavy bolter fire on my Boarboyz (Jake rolled a pair of 3's on his sustained fire dice, the git!). Still it is a testimony to the toughness of the Boarboyz that any of them survived this hail of fire at all. With most of my forces still intact, my most pressing concern was to finish off the Razorback, as I was more than aware of the potential destruction its armament of lascannon and twin plasma guns could inflict. To this end I decided to charge the Razorback with the Nobz in the battlewagon. As two of the Nobz were armed with power fists (armour penetration D6+D20+8) I was fairly certain they would be able to deal with even the Razorback's heavily armoured hide.



ORK TURN 2

In my movement phase the battlewagon moved up beside the Razorback, the Nobz dismounted and charged in to hand-to-hand combat. The remaining Boarboyz rode round the other side of the Razorback, and my vehicle squadron roared up alongside the battlewagon. In the centre, the Gretchin and Goffs continued their advance with

both Ghazghkull and the Dreadnought in support. On my right, the Deathskulls went into overwatch, nervously scanning the skies for the expected attack by the Space Marine Assault squad. The Snakebite Boyz ran towards the Deathskulls so that they would be close at hand if they needed help. Finally the dead Weirdboy's minderz moved into firing positions beside the building.

On the whole my shooting this turn was very disappointing. Neither the Squig Katapult or the Splatta Kannon managed to hit anything, while the combined fire of the entire vehicle squadron and the Dreadnought only managed to kill a single Devastator (though it was the one armed with the heavy bolter that had killed the Boarboyz!). Ghazghkull attempted a long range shot at the Space Marine Tactical squad but his *kustom blasta* malfunctioned and blew up – fortunately Ghazghkull was not harmed by the explosion. The shooting phase was only redeemed by the Shokk Attack gun, which also fired at the Space Marine Tactical squad. The weapon unleashed a deluge of frenzied Snotlings on the surprised Space Marines, killing four of them including the Space Marine armed with the squad's heavy bolter. Sadly the squad passed their panic test for suffering more than 25% casualties in a turn, so my *Craven Cowardice* strategy card remained unused.

In the hand-to-hand phase the Nobz mob tore into the Razorback. The gunner decided to duck back inside the vehicle rather than try to deal with three angry Nobz all by himself, but this was to no avail as the first Nob to attack the vehicle smashed a hole in the turret with his power fist, detonating the vehicle's ammo and blowing the turret off! With few warp cards being dealt, nothing very much happened in the psychic phase, other than the Space Marine Librarian storing another card in his force sword.

ULTRAMARINES TURN 2

With the Razorback destroyed and my heavy weapons troopers dying in droves, I was forced to take some gambles. Firstly, my Commander would attack the advancing Ork army by himself. He used his *Combat Drugs* to boost his movement and attacks then charged at double rate towards the Wartrak. The rest of my right flank stood still and gave him covering fire.

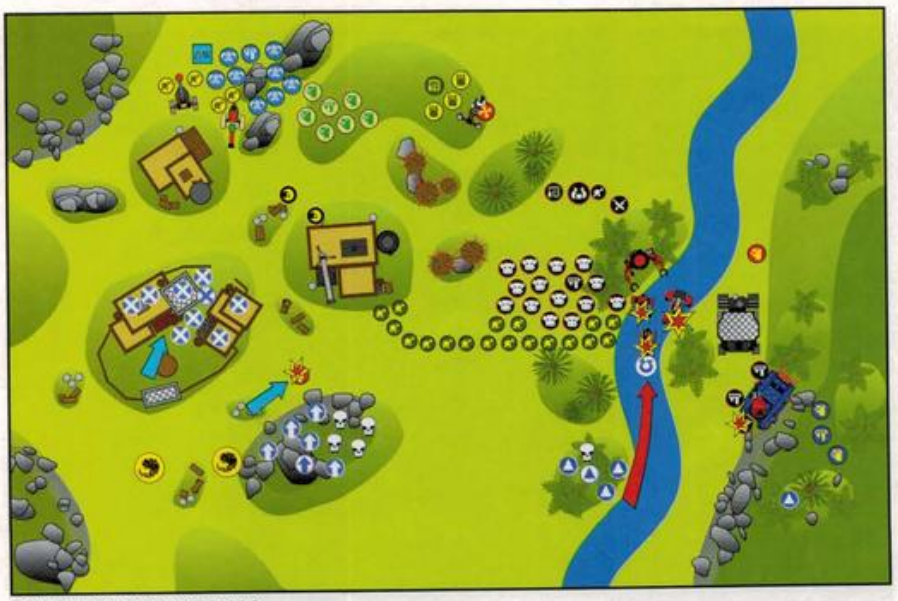
On my left, I saw a second gamble, one which gave me a chance of attacking Ghazghkull and fulfilling my mission. If I could just get my Librarian far enough forward then he could position a psychic *Gate* for the Assault squad to attack through. It was risky to charge across the open but if I didn't do it now then I wouldn't have time. There would be only one chance so in true heroic fashion, the Blood Angels' Librarian went for it…

The Deathskulls on overwatch opened fire with everything they had and the Librarian was hit by the heavy plasma gun, heavy bolta and one of their heavy stubbers. We then had a bit of a discussion. What happens when you get multiple hits on a model equipped with a displacer field – do you displace away after every shot or only after the first? We asked Andy Chambers who clarified the rule for us – When a displacer field is hit several times, whether it is in the shooting phase or in hand-to-hand combat, you roll for all of the damage and saves as normal. You only displace away once, after all the hits have been resolved, and only if the displacer actually saved one or more hits. In the end, only a single heavy bolta shell wounded the Librarian but Jervis rolled a 4 for the damage and killed him outright! The Tactical squad behind him were so stunned by this that they completely missed their targets.

On my right, I divided the fire from my few remaining Space Marines amongst the many Ork targets. Bolter fire cut down one more of the Nobz mob, reducing them to less than 50% and leaving them unable to fulfil Jervis' mission. With unfailing accuracy I continued to hit the Ork vehicle crew killing the drivers of both the buggy and the warbike.

The last vehicle in the squadron was the wartrak which was unlucky enough to be attacked by the Ultramarines Commander. Strengthened by the *Combat Drugs* he killed both the crew without any difficulty. All three of the Ork vehicle squadron were now out of control.

As my Librarian was dead there were now no psykers left and so no psychic phase. The final action of the turn was to check that the *Combat Drugs* remained in effect which they did. This was important as it meant that the Ultramarines Commander could reach the Ork battlewagon wherever it went.



ULTRAMARINES TURN 2

ORK TURN 3

the victory point they would have earned if all three vehicles had been destroyed.

With these preliminaries out of the way I was finally able to make my normal moves. The Snakebite Boarboyz and Dreadnought charged as described above, and the battlewagon roared into the Space Marines deployment zone. The Goffs and Gretchin only made a normal move this turn, to give them a chance to fire in the shooting phase. Meanwhile, the Snakebite Boyz and Deathskulls on my right once more went into overwatch, just in case the Space Marine assault squad attempted a desperate aerial assault on the last turn.

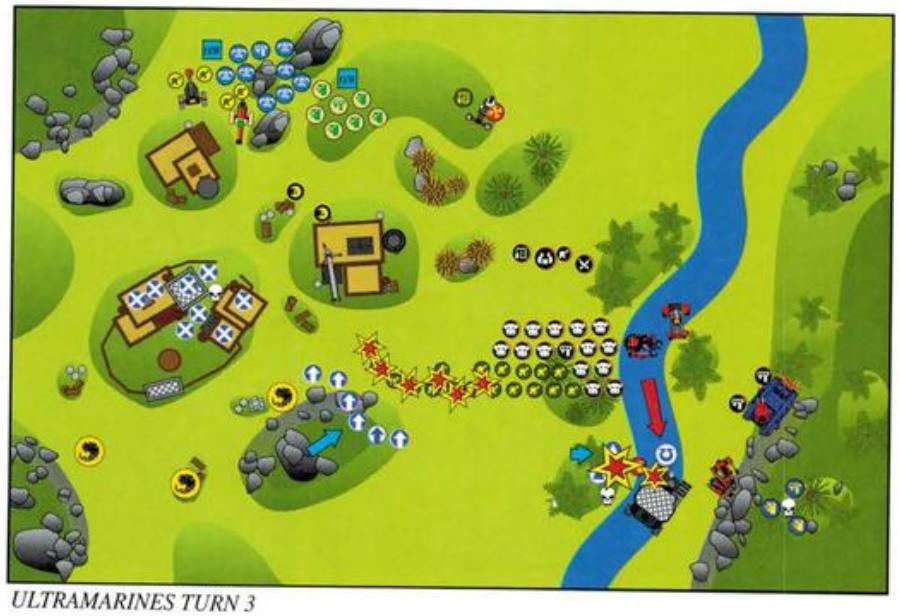
ORK TURN THREE

The main problem I faced on my final turn was that the only way I could achieve my objective was by moving my battlewagon into the Space Marines deployment area and then ensuring that it didn't suffer any damage in the final Space Marine turn. There were three models that could damage the battlewagon that I would need to neutralise: the Devastator armed with the lascannon, the Devastator with the missile launcher, and the Space Marine Commander. I decided to use my Snakebite Bigboss on the cyboar to charge the lascannon armed Space Marine, while the Boarboyz charged the missile launcher, and my Dreadnought charged the Space Marine Commander. While I expected to easily deal with the Devastators, I didn't really think I'd be able to beat the Ultramarine Commander. Instead, I hoped that the Dreadnought would survive and keep him locked in hand-to-hand combat so that he wouldn't be able to move in his own turn.

Before I did anything, however, I had Ghazghkull use his Waaagh power. This made him immune to damage for the remainder of the battle, so the Space Marines couldn't possible achieve their own victory conditions by killing him. Next my vehicle squadron had to be moved because all the vehicles in it were out of control! Although both the wartrak and the warbike crashed and burned, the war buggy survived, which denied the Space Marines

Once again the Orks' shooting was a little bit disappointing. The Nobz, Goffs and Gretchin managed to pick off one of the Devastators in the wood by the river, while the Splatta Kannon managed to take out one of the Space Marines from the Assault squad. Both the Shokk Attack Gun and the Squig Katapult missed their targets and the clouds of buzzer squigs already on the board drifted in the wrong direction.

Close combat was much more satisfying and both the Boarboyz and the Snakebite Bigboss on his cyboar were able to easily deal with their opponents, cutting down the two Devastators armed with the missile launcher and lascannon. The Space Marine Commander was another matter, however, and he quickly dispatched the Dreadnought by blasting one of its legs off with a melta bomb. The question was, would he be able to damage the battlewagon in the final turn?



ULTRAMARINES TURN 3

The Ork Dreadnought and Ultramarines Commander locked in hand-to-hand combat.

ULTRAMARINES TURN 3

Victory was in my grasp. Well, maybe. I had to kill a lot of Orks *and* my Commander had to destroy the battlewagon, but it was just possible with a bit of luck.

My movement was firstly to charge the battlewagon with my Commander. This was my last chance to destroy it and stop Jervis from achieving his primary objective. The rest of my troops only moved to give themselves better firing positions.

Jervis' overwatching troops once again began my shooting phase with the Deathskulls and Snakebites laying down a storm of fire on my Tactical squad. To Jervis' complete frustration he failed to get even the one kill that would take the squad to 50% and I returned fire with my Assault squad. To my dismay, the Space Marines proved to be just as unlucky as the Orks with plasma guns jamming and bolter shells bouncing off Gretchin crew! Giving the left flank up as a bad lot I turned to the centre.

In front of my Tactical squad was a sea of Gretchin who were too good a target to miss. If I could cause enough damage to make them fail a leadership test then they would be worth a victory point. The entire Tactical squad let fly with a hail of frag grenades and half the Gretchin mob disappeared amongst the explosions. As the smoke cleared, ten dead bodies lay on the ground but despite these horrific casualties the Gretchin were near Ghazghkull and so passed their leadership test easily.

On the right I saw a chance for an easy victory point and my last two Devastators both fired at the Snakebite Bigboss. Armed with bolt pistols I was expecting a fairly easily kill, but both shots missed completely from 1" range!

Finally we came to the most crucial action of this last turn – the Commander's hand-to-hand assault on the Ork battlewagon. With his attacks still doubled by the *Combat Drugs*, the Commander placed six melta bombs around the wheel of the battlewagon – its weakest point. As he stepped back, massive explosions tore apart the Ork vehicle, throwing its twisted wreckage high into the air. But my joy was short lived as the remains of the battlewagon crashed down on the heads of the Snakebites' Bigboss and my last two Devastators, crushing all three of them beneath its smoking debris!

I had stopped Jervis but at what a cost!

FINAL VICTORY POINTS

ORKS 12 POINTS

ULTRAMARINES 8 POINTS

HOW I WON SUCH A GLORIOUS VICTORY!

As ever, I find I have much less to say after winning a battle than I do after losing one. This is partially because my plan worked, which leaves me little to do other than point out how brilliant it was in the first place! Seriously though, the old adage "if it ain't broke don't fix it" certainly applies here – the plan worked so I wouldn't change it! However, where I did learn some very useful lessons was in basic unit tactics.

First of all, I have to say I was more than pleased with the performance of the Deathskulls. In most of my previous games with them they have blasted away all battle without very much success – not that this is all that surprising, as more often than not they are trying to hit troops in hard cover and need a 6 to hit! This time, intimidated by the Space Marine Assault squad, I put them into overwatch on all three of my turns and it proved a resounding success. Not only did it allow them to pick off the Space Marine Librarian as he tried to get to the rocks, but it also convinced Jake not to launch an aerial attack with the Space Marine Assault squad on his final turn. What this underlined to me was that you can do almost as much (if not more) with the threat of massed firepower as you can achieve by actually using it!

The other troops that impressed me in this battle were the Snakebite Boarboyz and their Bigboss on his cyboar. It's been quite a while since I used any Boarboyz, and I'd forgotten quite how effective they can be. Their combination of high speed and fearsome close combat ability makes them excellent assault troops. This goes double for the Bigboss on his cyboar! In fact, on the turn he charged he would have been a match for the Ultramarines' Commander, despite the fact that the Space Marine was pumped up with *Combat Drugs*. With hindsight I would have been better advised to have used him against the Commander rather than 'over-killing' the Devastator Marine he did attack.

However, the main mistake I made was splitting the fire of my field artillery. Rather than concentrating all my weapons on one target, I spread their shots around to hit several different squads. Although firing the Shokk Attack Gun at the Devastators on the hill on the first turn was justified to a certain extent, splitting the fire of the Squig Katapult and Splatta Kannon between the Tactical squad and the Assault squad was certainly an error. In the end, although I managed to inflict some casualties on both units, neither was reduced to half strength or less. If I had concentrated all my fire on the Tactical squad I would probably have caused enough extra casualties to reduce it to half strength and gain another victory point. Who knows, I might have even wiped the squad out, or have had a chance to break it with the *Craven Cowardice* card which I was otherwise unable to use during the battle.

The other lesson that I learnt about my field artillery was to fire Squig Katapults at targets that are not likely to get up and move away. During the game I did the complete opposite by shooting at the Assault squad for two turns, with the result that the buzzer squigs were left behind and had no effect on the battle. If I had used the Squig Katapult against the Tactical squad that seemed intent on remaining in place on the hill, then I would have had a better chance of the angry buzzer squigs finding a target, or at least forcing the Space Marines to move when they obviously didn't want to!

All in all, however, I was more than pleased with the way things worked out, and must admit that I had a good feeling about the game right from the start when the *Virus Outbreak* killed off the Adeptus Psyker and my doubled strategy rating gave me the first turn. The psychological effects that events like this can have on the players taking part can have a profound effect on a battle, and in this case they certainly filled me with confidence while rocking Jake back on his heels right from the start of the game. Now if I could only have a battle where my Orks were able to shoot straight throughout the game (rather than just on the first turn as in this case) then I could really pull off a big win!

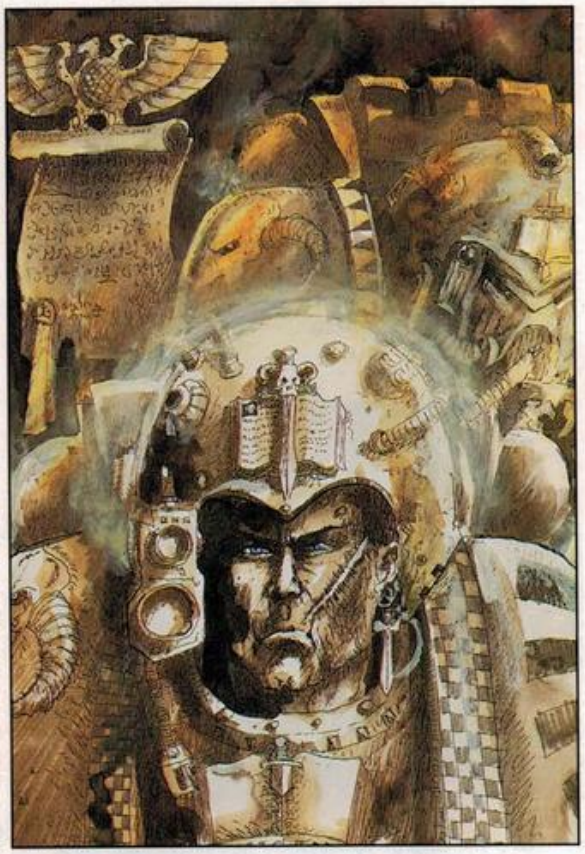
SHAME AND DEFEAT

Oh the shame of it – defeated by the Orks! All I can say is that the Orks are back with a vengeance. My last outing against them in White Dwarf 171, was a completely different affair with me being the side doing the thrashing. The new Ork Codex makes fighting the Ork army a completely different prospect.

The hero of the Ultramarines was their Commander who almost single-handedly halted the Ork advance. As Jervis says – "real heroes get stuck in" and he certainly did that, taking on bikes, battlewagon and the Ork Dreadnought in hand-to-hand combat and emerging without a scratch. Once again the large amount of equipment I gave him proved a worthwhile investment as the Commander's *Combat Drugs* and melta bombs saved me from complete embarrassment. Characters like this cost lots of points and some players feel that it is too risky to add to this cost by giving them lots of wargear. I disagree and usually 'tool-up' my best characters with all sorts of equipment. Characters have access to a lot of wargear that normal troopers do not, so why not use it? This is especially true of extra defences such as displacer fields or *Aegis Suits* which protect your expensive investment. On the subject of psychic protection, I always think that having several psykers is a good thing but Jervis managed quite adequately with only one and a second level one at that. I'm not convinced yet but I'll have to experiment with taking fewer psykers if only because it means I can take more guns!

I am always impressed by the resilience of the Space Marines. When they have their backs to the wall they are able to pull off some incredible feats. Usually, they are badly outnumbered and they have to pick and choose their shots very carefully, using the smallest number of men you can to get each job done – a surgical operation rather than the Ork's sledgehammer. When things begin to go wrong, whether through your own fault or simple bad luck, then you have the exacting task of struggling to scrape through against the odds. This is when the Space Marines come into their own. With their ability to keep on going despite losses and their high kill ratio (they kill a lot of the enemy for each model they lose) they are the ideal troops to have when you are in a corner.

One slightly unusual aspect of my use of the Ultramarines was my use of ten man squads. Like most players I normally split Space Marines into five-man combat squads, but against the Orks I prefer keep them in larger units. This is because bigger squads survive longer than little ones and have to take fewer leadership tests. Also, because the large Ork mobs have to fire at the same target your squads are likely to take a lot of damage in a short space of time. Big squads survive longer and deny the enemy victory points for reducing them to 50% strength. If I had fielded my Assault and Tactical squads as five-man combat squads Jervis would have probably got some VPs for the number that he killed. As it was, neither was reduced to 50% and he got nothing for his efforts.



Where I really lost the battle was my sloppy use of the Assault squad. With some armies you have enough troops for it not to matter all that much if you bungle the deployment of a squad or two. Not with the Space Marines. I had recently been using the Eldar and their Swooping Hawks who are similar to Space Marine Assault troops in that they can jump over terrain features, but importantly different in how the rules work. As it was I deployed my Assault Marines as if they were Swooping Hawks and suffered for my mistake for the whole battle.

Despite the fact that I lost I was pleased that I stopped Jervis from getting his primary objective and was unsurprised that I didn't achieve mine. I never thought that there was a great chance of my assassinating Ghazghkull in three turns, and when the Librarian died I was forced to abandon this mission completely, and concentrate instead on keeping Jervis out of my deployment zone.

Looking across the table for a moment, I think that Jervis played very well, demonstrating what you can achieve with the Orks if you understand their strengths. One of his best moves, judged by the amount of trouble it caused me, was to have the Deathskulls and Snakebites on overwatch for much of the battle. This meant that it was suicidal to use the jump packs as it would just place the Assault squad in a better place for the Ork's heavy weapons to shoot at them. I hadn't really thought this through properly and spent the battle without any real plan for the Assault squad. This underlines, again, the benefit of knowing your foe and finding their weak points. The best way of doing this is to play with the army yourself so that you understand it from your own experience – my next project is a Blood Axe and Snakebite army…

HOLD THE LINE

By Jake Thornton and Adrian Wood

Ragnar Blackmane leads the Space Wolves in a bloody assault on an Eldar position. This close-fought game uses the Battle Bunker rules and missions from White Dwarf 169.

The time for war had come again. Once more the calm of the Dome of Crystal Seers must be abandoned for the clamour of battle. If he had been younger he might have bemoaned this passing of tranquillity, or felt some self-pity for his burden – but no longer. Now Eldrad Ulthran, Farseer of Ulthwé, saw only his duty – to guide the Eldar to the safest of the many possible threads of destiny.

The visions had started as a mere glimmer of unease but now they were painful in their intensity. Soon, very soon now, a rift would open to the warp. A tear would appear in the very fabric of space, and through it would pour foul Chaos legions of the most unspeakable abominations to kill and maim and despoil. They would fall upon the Imperial colony of Dabenlar IV and destroy every living thing.

Whatever the twisted reasoning of the Chaos gods, this insignificant little colony was the key to a great disaster. Stop Chaos here and they would be halted for decades, fail and they would conquer a hundred planets.

He had seen it on Haran many years ago, when the gods of Chaos encroached upon the worlds of real space. From the warp they had come to ravage the colonies of the Exodite Lords. Eldrad had foreseen their attack and the hastily summoned Eldar fought desperately to push the twisted Chaos hordes back through the rift and into the warp. Victory belonged to the Eldar but at a terrible cost and since that time, the shattered planet had been known as Haranshemash – the world of blood and tears.

He had gone in person to the Imperial Governor but it had all been in vain. Eldrad had spoken of the great danger but the fool had just laughed in his face. "Chaos is just a myth, old man" he had said. Plainly he did not understand.

Yet while the Imperial Governor blindly led his people over the edge of the blackest abyss, Eldrad clung to the hope that the disaster could be averted. The Imperial forces were strong and could defeat the might of Chaos if they were alerted in time. If they were not prepared for war they would be overrun before they had a chance to muster.

How could he make them listen? How could he force them to defend themselves? If they did nothing they would be butchered even before they lifted their weapons. The answer was a desperate one and one which Eldrad had striven to avoid, but there was no choice – he would attack the planet himself. It didn't matter if the Imperial forces were there to defend from Eldar aggression or from the dark creatures of the warp. All that mattered was that the forces of Chaos were met with the strongest armies wherever they attacked. This was the only way.

The Eldar attack had been swift and precise, overrunning the defences on a small peninsula. Across the neck of this land was an ancient line of bunkers and forts whose sturdy armoured sides were a reminder of past wars. Attack after attack failed to dislodge the Eldar from their well protected position and in panic the Governor had pleaded for the aid of the Space Marines.

Battle Companies of the Space Wolves and Ultramarines Chapters answered the call. These Space Marines would make the next attack. No Eldar could stand before the might of the Emperor's finest warriors.

As the early morning light broke over the distant mountains, Eldrad gazed over the field before him. They were coming, he thought, the Space Marines were coming... and soon too was Chaos.

INTRODUCTION

Following the release of the Space Wolves and Eldar Codex books for Warhammer 40,000, Adrian and Jake had been itching to fight another battle. Both of them had been playing with the Dark Millennium rules for several months but not against each other, and they wanted to see what unpleasant surprises they could unleash.

They decided to fight a battle using the rules for battle bunkers and the two new mission cards printed in White Dwarf 169. In a reversal of their normal tactics, Adrian took the more defensive role of the *Hold the Line* mission with the Eldar, whilst Jake took command of the Space Wolves on a *Bunker Assault*. As *Bunker Assault* is so difficult to achieve in four turns, the battle was fought over six turns as described on the mission card. Both armies were selected from the Studio miniatures collection using the latest Codex books.

As usual, we took notes and snapshots during the game which enabled us to recreate the most interesting parts of the battle later under proper photography lights and with better equipment.

THE ELDAR PLAN

By Adrian Wood

Once again I was facing my arch enemy in a new guise. Jake and I have fought against each other many times, and several of our battles have been reported in White Dwarf. I hadn't beaten him yet (in print) but I felt that this would be the time.

One of Jake's strengths is that he always has a very clear plan in mind when he plays. In order to beat him I had to anticipate what this plan would be, and come up with my own counter-strategy. To begin with, I carefully considered my objectives. My task was to defend the bunkers and crush the Space Wolves' advance. It was obvious that this would force me to engage in both a defensive and an offensive battle, and so with this in mind I started to select my force.

Firstly, I bought the three battle bunkers. These would form the defensive line that I had to hold. Then, with their 150 points accounted for, I turned to the army itself. Starting with the characters section, I chose the Farseer of Ulthwé, Eldrad Ulthran, to act as Army commander. For sheer psychic power and intimidation factor he was a must. I equipped Eldrad with the *Staff of Ulthamar* and a *Displacer Field* for protection. I also took a Warlock Master to give me access to even more psychic power. He was armed with one of the special Eldar wargear cards – a *Singing Spear*.

I knew that Jake would want pound my bunkers from a distance with whatever heavy weapons he could muster. I might easily find myself facing lascannons carried by Space Wolves Long Fangs, or by a tank of some kind. In order to deal with any support weapons, and also to keep the Space Wolves at bay, I decided to take both a War Walker and a Dreadnought. With two of these devastating machines I hoped to be able to match the Space Marines in heavy firepower, and to draw some of the attention away from my more vulnerable foot troops.

To give support to my advancing squads and threaten any vehicles, I decided to use a lascannon mounted on an anti-grav platform. This was positioned in a bunker to create a secure gun-emplacement. With my characters and support chosen, I turned to the squads.

To start with, I chose Warp Spiders, Swooping Hawks and a Guardian squad on jetbikes to weed out any advancing Space Marines before they could get dug in on my half of the battlefield. These highly mobile squads would form my "aggressive defence".

Should the Space Marines overcome the advance guard, they would have to fight their way past a squad of the lethal Howling Banshees. These deadly Eldar warriors would have the kind of mobility and power to counter any charge the Space Wolves might make at the bunkers.

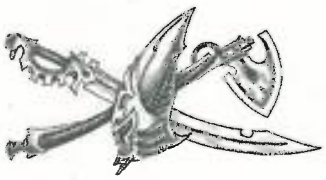
My final choices of troops were to defend the bunkers themselves and provide a reserve to plug any gaps which appeared in the "aggressive defence". Firstly, I chose a Guardian squad to occupy one of the bunkers. This was followed by a squad of Dire Avengers who would guard one of my flanks. The last squad I took was the obligatory Dark Reapers. These Aspect Warriors are some of my favourite troops as they can destroy almost anything from the other side of the board! I decided to place them on the roof of my right hand bunker. From here they should be able to cover most of the battlefield, and would be well protected should they be seriously threatened and have to drop through the roof-hatch to safety.

Before we started the battle we dealt out the strategy cards. I got *Flank March*, *Malfunction*, and *Look Out Sir – Aargh!*. Normally, I would have only got two, one for each thousand points in the army. However, my commander was Eldrad Ulthran whose precognitive powers are so good that he is allowed an extra strategy card. I decided to send the Howling Banshees on the *Flank March* so that they could give Jake a nasty surprise later. The other two cards I kept in reserve.

Looking at the army I had chosen, I was very happy with the spread of different squads and vehicles. This diversity would give me a great deal of flexibility to respond to Jake's attack wherever it came.

2000 POINT ELDAR ARMY

Eldrad Ulthran, Farseer of Ulthwé. He is protected by a *Displacer Field* and carries the *Staff of Ulthamar*.



3 Dark Reapers.

Warlock Master protected by a *Conversion Field* and armed with a *Singing Spear*.

5 Howling Banshees.

4 Warp Spiders.

5 Swooping Hawks.

5 Dire Avengers.

5 Guardians wearing mesh armour and armed with shuriken catapults.

Dreadnought with heavy plasma gun, power fists, shuriken catapult and flamer.

Lascannon on Anti Grav Platform. The 2 **Guardian** crew wear mesh armour and carry laspistols.

War Walker with scatter laser and lascannon.

5 Guardians riding jetbikes armed with twin shuriken catapults. The riders wear mesh armour and are armed with lasguns.

3 Battle bunkers.

BUNKER ASSAULT

By Jake Thornton

Bunker Assault is not one of the easier missions to accomplish. You do, however, get an extra two turns to charge across the board, so it *is* achievable with enough brute force and determination. Personally, I rather like the opportunity to play a longer game as it gives you a chance to observe the to and fro of fortune as attacks and counter attacks build up. You can afford to be a bit more careful on your approach to your objective and this encourages better play. The possibilities for bloodshed are also increased as you have two extra turns in which to kill the enemy! The only difficulty in fighting extended battles at home is being able to leave the battlefield set up if you can't finish the game in one go.

SPACE WOLVES PLAN

With the *Ambush* strategy card I was able to sneak one of the Blood Claws battle packs an extra 12" forward and have them set up both hidden and on overwatch. This forward position would both hinder the Eldar movement and help to cover my own advance as the second Blood Claws battle pack moved up. I intended to keep the overwatch for as long as possible as the threat of it is often more of a problem for your opponent than the effect of the fire it unleashes. Adrian would either have to limit his moves or try to take out the overwatching Blood Claws. Whatever he decided to do it would mean altering his plans which is half-way to upsetting them. Once the second battle pack had advanced to join the first, they would form a single wave of deadly close combat troops who would smash aside the Eldar defences in a final assault.

My Long Fangs, Land Raider and the Space Wolves Dreadnought Bjorn the Fell-Handed would all provide heavy covering fire from my deployment zone. I chose these forces specially for this task and knew that they were the best that was available. With this primary duty in mind I would have to resist the temptation to attack with everything all at once. I would only advance with these troops to provide close-in support if the assault was to fail and had to be withdrawn, or if the objectives were taken and the Blood Claws needed help beating off the inevitable Eldar counter attacks.

My left flank was far less important as it didn't face any of the battle bunkers. Even so, I still had to deploy something there just to tie down whatever Adrian had. I decided that this end of my line would be covered by the Adeptus Astra Telepathica Psyker Champion on his own. Although he was only one man, he had the awesome psychic power *Lightning Arc* which could potentially destroy any enemy squad in one fell swoop. He also had the power *Machine Curse* to attack the Eldar War Walker or Dreadnought if either of these was placed in range. With these powers he would easily be able to tie down a much larger force and give the Space Wolves on the rest of the battlefield an easier task.

As with any other Space Marines, it's a good idea for the Space Wolves to only attack on a limited front as you get so few troops for your points. With the Psyker Champion keeping the Eldar busy at one end of the battlefield, I would be able to concentrate almost my entire force of the Emperor's finest warriors at the other.

I could see it already… As the heavy guns and missiles of the Long Fangs, Land Raider and Bjorn the Fell-handed pounded the defences, the attack would begin. Battle packs of Blood Claws armed with assault weapons and melta bombs would surge forwards to overwhelm the battered and dazed Eldar defences. Bunkers would be captured in vicious hand-to-hand fighting or destroyed in earth-shaking explosions by the hand-placed demolition charges. Victory would be swift and total!

At least, that was the plan…

2000 POINT SPACE WOLVES ARMY

Wolf Lord **Ragnar Blackmane** wearing power armour and a *displacer field*. He is armed with a *Master-crafted Bolt Pistol* and the chainsword *Frostfang*.

Rune Priest **Njal Stormcaller** wearing power armour, a *displacer field* and the *Hood of Gnyrll*. He is armed with a *Runestaff* and is accompanied by *Nightwing the Psyber Raven*.

Space Wolves **Iron Priest** wearing power armour and armed with a bolt pistol and a power axe.

Imperial Assassin equipped with *Polymorphine*, *Combi-weapon*, Melta bombs, *Combat Drugs*, power sword and laspistol.

Psyker Champion wearing flak armour and armed with a laspistol and a *Force Rod*.

Bjorn the Fell Handed, Space Wolves Dreadnought.

Ultramarines **Land Raider** with additional auto-launchers loaded with blind grenades.

Long Fangs Sergeant wearing power armour and armed with a bolt gun and power axe.

4 Long Fangs wearing power armour and armed with a lascannon, heavy bolter and two missile launchers.

Blood Claws Sergeant wearing power armour and armed with a chainsword, power fist and melta bombs.

Blood Claws Veteran wearing power armour and armed with a hand flamer, power fist and melta bombs.

8 Blood Claws wearing power armour and armed with various assault weapons and melta bombs.

DEPLOYMENT

SPACE WOLVES TURN 1

Jake: Having won the dice roll for first turn, I began the Space Wolves' attack by moving both Bjorn and the Land Raider forward into their firing positions. From these advanced positions they would command the centre of the battlefield with their heavy weapons, cutting down any Eldar who were foolish enough to stray into the open.

On my right, as the first Blood Claws pack waited in ambush the second ran forwards to join them, followed by Ragnar and Njal. I didn't want either of these two powerful characters to be killed early in the battle so they were slightly behind the Blood Claws. When the time came to commit them they would charge in with the rest, but to start with it seemed wise to be careful with them.

On the other side of the battlefield, the Psyker Champion dodged from crater to crater. This closed the range so that he could wreak havoc with his psychic powers of *Machine Curse* and *Lightning Arc* in the following turns. If I could bring down the War Walker then it would divert a lot of Adrian's attention away from the Blood Claws.

I began the shooting phase with what was intended to be a preparatory barrage of heavy weapons' fire from the vehicles and Long Fangs. Things began to go wrong immediately.

Bjorn's assault cannon proved to be just half an inch out of range of the Dark Reapers atop their bunker, and his shot was completely wasted. The Land Raider also opened fire at the Dark Reapers' bunker with its twin lascannon and with an evil grin Adrian played the *Malfunction* strategy card. I watched in complete horror as he rolled two sixes in a row, blowing up the weapon and causing a secondary explosion in the engine that killed the crew and span the crippled machine around. A smouldering wreck worth 225 points and not a shot fired!

I looked to my Long Fangs for some solace but they fared little better. Their heavy bolter rolled double jams on the sustained fire dice! The lascannon missed Adrian's War Walker!! And one of the missile launchers failed to hit the Dark Reapers!!!

Only the second missile launcher hit anything at all. As it struck the War Walker's rider I thought for a moment that I was being repaid for all my bad luck, but I was wrong. Adrian laughed as the krak missile bounced harmlessly off the special power field protecting the Eldar and my shooting phase came to an end having achieved nothing.

SPACE WOLVES TURN 1

Gnashing my teeth, I rolled an 8 for the number of warp cards and started by using *Machine Curse* against the War Walker which was now in range of my Psyker Champion. Adrian nullified it, and tried in turn to place *Battle Fate* on his Dark Reapers. This was nullified in turn and the psychic phase ended with both sides storing force cards for future use.

By the end of this nightmare first turn I was tearing my hair out. The preparatory bombardment hadn't killed anything at all and had cost me the Land Raider. This was a very poor rate of exchange and I now had to face the fire of the unscathed Dark Reapers.

ELDAR TURN 1

ELDAR TURN 1

Adrian: I couldn't believe the events of the Space Wolves' first turn! Once I'd stopped laughing I picked myself up off the floor and started my move.

With the Howling Banshees still on their *Flank March* I wasn't able to advance them onto the battlefield, but I still had plenty of other Eldar to move. I sent the Swooping Hawks flying high over the battlefield and the jetbikes skimming through the woods, hunting for the Blood Claws. Unfortunately, the Blood Claws were too deeply hidden to be targeted by the riders.

Behind the advancing jetbikes, the Guardian squad emerged from behind the bunker and ran forwards. The Dreadnought too came out of hiding and repositioned itself so that it could pinpoint a single Blood Claw amongst the dense foliage.

On my right flank, I advanced the War Walker so that it could target the Long Fangs with its scatter laser and lascannon. Unlike this deadly vehicle, the Dire Avengers had no long ranged weapons and were next to useless thanks to Jake's careful positioning of his troops. To get them into the battle I

As the Eldar prepare their defences...

began to move them towards my left flank as fast as I could. I dropped a single Dark Reaper through the hatch into the right hand bunker – I wasn't going to get away with having three Dark Reapers in plain view again. I must remember in future to hide troops in cover at the beginning of a battle!

I opened the firing with the two Dark Reapers still on the roof of the bunker. Both of their krak missiles hit Bjorn the Fell-Handed on the same arm, but only one managed to penetrate his immensely thick armour. With the possibility of losing the second of his vehicles so soon, Jake looked on nervously as I rolled the dice for damage, hoping for a 6. Sadly, I only rolled a 2 and Jake breathed a sigh of relief. With Bjorn's special pool of dice modifiers, the damage was reduced to a 1 which was as low as it is allowed to be modified. Bjorn's assault cannon was now partially paralysed and although it could still fire, it couldn't be used in hand-to-hand combat and reduced his number of attacks by 1.

Next, I fired the War Walker's weapons at the Long Fangs. The lascannon killed one of the Space Marines but the scatter laser failed to wound either the Sergeant or the Long Fang with the missile launcher – even though it peppered their position with six shots!

The Dreadnought had moved from behind the left-hand bunker so that it could see a single Blood Claw between the patches of jungle. Now it opened fire with its deadly heavy plasma gun but the shot went wide and the incandescent ball of plasma flew past its target and exploded, setting fire to some trees with the blast.

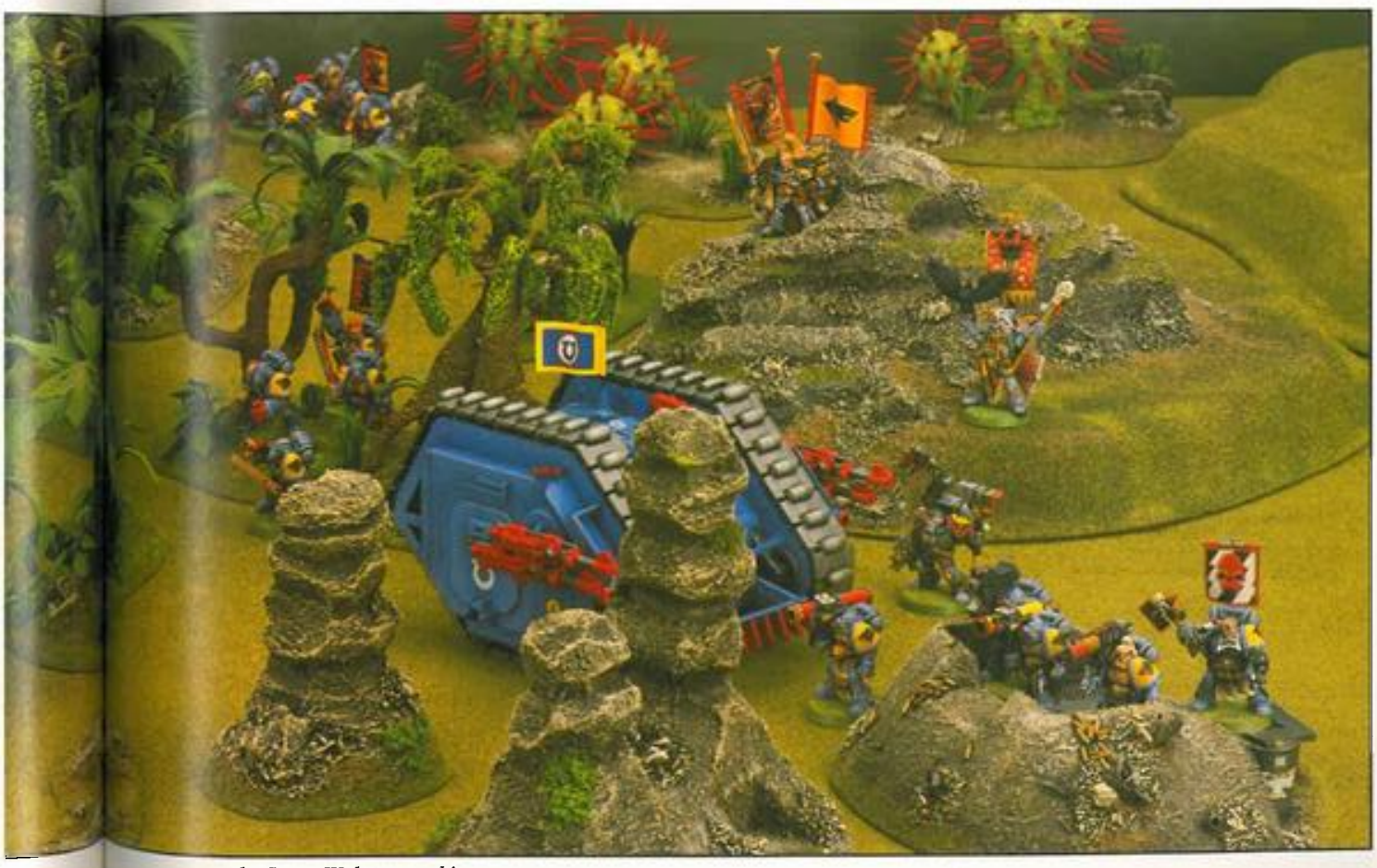
I rolled six warp cards and began the psychic phase with my commander – Eldrad Ulthran. I tried to use *Guide* to fire the Dreadnought's heavy weapon at the Blood Claws again, but

Jake nullified it. Njal then placed a storm of *Hellfire* over the jetbikes which killed one of the riders and sent the vehicle spinning out of control.

TURN 1 VICTORY POINTS

ELDAR 4 POINTS

SPACE WOLVES 0 POINTS



...the Space Wolves attack!

SPACE WOLVES TURN 2

SPACE WOLVES TURN 2

Jake: In an attempt to reclaim something from the damaged Land Raider, I sent the Iron Priest to try and repair it. Rolling a 1 he found the machine completely dead and was only able to chant a litany for its departing spirit. Despite this, I decided to leave him there to fire the intact lascannons on the right hand side which had luckily been left in quite a good position. This regained some heavy weapons for me, and also denied Adrian the full VPs for the Land Raider as it was no longer crewless.

On my right flank, Njal moved up behind the Blood Claws who were still waiting in ambush for the Eldar. The second battle pack continued to advance under the watchful eye of their commander, Ragnar Blackmane, who remained in cover behind them.

Across the battlefield, Bjorn walked straight forward ensuring that his target wouldn't be out of range this turn. Luck wasn't with me though, and his assault cannon still missed the Dark Reapers who seemed to be leading charmed lives! The Long Fangs had lost one dead and another was busy clearing a jammed weapon so their firepower was rather depleted. However, the remaining two Long Fangs with missile launchers fired again. Both missiles found their marks, one bouncing off the armour on the War Walker, the other killing one of the Dark Reapers – at last!

On my far right, the advancing Blood Claws pack opened fire on the rapidly closing jetbikes, damaging one of them with a lucky plasma pistol hit. With part of it shot away, Adrian would now have to roll each turn to maintain control of the vehicle.

In the psychic phase my Psyker Champion tried again to *Machine Curse* the War Walker. Adrian played *Daemonic Attack*, automatically nullifying the power and dragging my unfortunate Psyker Champion into the warp and his doom. The Eldar Warlock then played *Fortune* on the Dark Reapers to add +2 to their saving throw. At the other end of the battlefield Njal placed a storm of *Hellfire* on the Guardian crew of the weapons platform but failed to hurt either of them.

ELDAR TURN 2

Adrian: With one Dark Reaper dead, things were starting to get a bit more dangerous. I didn't think that the Blood Claws were close enough for me to charge with my Howling Banshees so I decided to delay the arrival of my *Flank March* for a turn. Starting with the compulsory moves, the first out of control jetbike veered off and nearly collided with a tree, while the second failed to respond to its rider's commands and powered forward.

Jake kept glancing at the Warp Spiders in a suspicious way and in a flash of sudden paranoia I realised that the Assassin could easily be one of them! For Eldrad's safety I quickly warp-jumped these Aspect Warriors out of charge range.

ELDAR TURN 2

Eldar jetbikes lead the counter-attack as the Space Wolves close in.

On my left, the Dreadnought, jetbikes and Guardians advanced to repel the Blood Claws. As they moved into range Jake opened fire with his Blood Claws who had been waiting in ambush on Overwatch. Luckily the only casualty was the rider of the jetbike which was already out of control. The lead jetbike returned fire and managed to hit every single one of the Blood Claws in the jungle but their toughness and power armour meant that I didn't slay a single trooper!

I repositioned the Dark Reaper inside the bunker to fire through a vision slit whilst his companion on the roof fired at Bjorn. His aim was good and the krak missile smashed into the Space Wolves' Dreadnought, hitting him on the left arm but failing to get through his thick armour. Next it was the turn of the Long Fangs who came under heavy fire from my War Walker. Much to my frustration, the lascannon missed and all of the scatter laser's hits failed to wound. I then turned to my Dreadnought and fired its heavy plasma gun at the Land Raider. Unfortunately, I forgot to fire on maximum power, the only setting at which a heavy plasma gun has any real chance of penetrating a tank's armour, and so the Iron Priest was safe.

I rolled a paltry three warp cards and the Warlock Master immediately cast *Battle Fate* on the Dark Reapers. Njal tried to play *Hellfire* once again, but before he could even declare a target I had nullified it.

TURN 2 VICTORY POINTS

ELDAR 3 POINTS

SPACE WOLVES 0 POINTS

SPACE WOLVES TURN 3

Jake: Before I did anything else I revealed that one of the dreaded Warp Spiders was, in fact, an Imperial Assassin using *Polymorphine*. To add insult to injury, the morale of the remaining three Warp Spiders failed and they ran from the battlefield! Ignoring the fleeing Aspect Warriors, the Assassin used his *Combat Drugs* which doubled his movement, and then charged the Farseer Eldrad Ulthran. Adrian's ploy of moving the Warp Spiders to a safe distance hadn't worked as the *Combat Drugs* meant that Eldrad was still in charge range.

In the centre of the battlefield, Bjorn advanced to close the range for his flamer and lightning claws. On my right, the Blood Claws who had sprung their ambush now began to advance, followed by Njal. The second Blood Claws pack prepared to fire again at the jetbikes who barred their way.

Bjorn the Fell-Handed began the firing with his assault cannon, finally hitting the remaining Dark Reaper on top of the bunker – seven times! The Aspect Warrior was cut to pieces, but the last survivor of the squad was safely hidden inside the bunker and passed his break test.

Whilst the Long Fang with the heavy bolter cleared his second jam, the rest of his squad fired again. Another krak missile bounced harmlessly off the War Walker and a frag missile failed to find the vision slits on the Dark Reaper's bunker, exploding ineffectively against its side.

From the crippled Land Raider the Iron Priest fired twin lascannons at Adrian's Dreadnought. Both shots hit the legs but unluckily neither penetrated the armour and the machine was undamaged.

Finally, the Eldar jetbikes came under fire from my Blood Claws. Plasma pistols and rapid firing bolt pistols peppered the vehicles with shots, hitting them five times. To my complete frustration, all of the hits struck the bikes instead of their riders and none of them was even scratched, let alone destroyed!

For the first time in the game we had a hand-to-hand combat phase with the fight between Eldrad and the Imperial Assassin. Metabolically accelerated by his *Combat Drugs*, the Assassin rolled eight dice for his attack and managed to roll four 1's! Despite these fumbles he still beat the Eldar, hitting the Farseer twice, but all to no avail as Eldrad's displacer field carried him to safety. Muttering under my breath I rolled for the warp flux and got a 5.

As Eldrad had escaped my assassination attempt, I had another go at him. Njal tried to use *Hellfire* on the Eldar Farseer but Adrian played *Reflection* and it rebounded back at my Rune Priest. Unluckily for Adrian, it failed to reach my lines, bursting into fiery life over a patch of jungle. Next, Eldrad unleashed the *Eldritch Storm* on the Blood Claws closest to him and they were blown out of the cover of the jungle into the open ground under the shuriken catapults of his Guardian squad. As there was nothing I could do to help the Blood Claws I turned my attention elsewhere, nullifying the *Fortune* that had been placed on the Dark Reapers in the previous turn. Finally, I rolled to see if the Assassin's *Combat Drugs* remained in effect, which they did.

ELDAR TURN 3

Adrian: Jake had played his hand at last. The psychological advantage of a polymorphed Assassin was over, and Eldrad had survived the attempt on his life. As far as the Warp Spiders were concerned, I must say that if a friend of mine turned out to be an Imperial Assassin I would run for it too!

Now the time had come for me to play *my* hand. Firstly I declared that the Howling Banshees would charge the Blood Claws nearest the table edge, and used the *Flank March* strategy card to bring them onto the battlefield. I also declared a charge by the Dreadnought against the Assassin. It should be noted that although the Dreadnought couldn't actually see the Assassin when the charge was declared, the Assassin's position was known to the Eldar and so the Dreadnought was allowed to charge. Only if the Assassin had been hiding would a charge have been impossible.

Meanwhile, I had to roll for the compulsory movement of the crippled jetbikes. One moved completely off the table, and the second flew crazily across the board.

The Howling Banshees passed their Leadership test to arrive on time from their *Flank March,* and pounced on the Blood Claws. The Dreadnought clashed with the Assassin whilst I moved Eldrad against the bunker wall and out of harm's way. I had to keep the Assassin occupied for as long as possible until his *Combat Drugs* wore off.

To coincide with the charge of the Howling Banshees I landed the Swooping Hawks behind the cover of a huge, red barbed cactus in the corner of the battlefield. They would be able to reach the Long Fangs in a turn or two of flying as long as they weren't shot up by Ragnar first.

I sent the remaining jetbikes and the Guardians after the Blood Claws who had been thrust into the open by the *Eldritch Storm* during the last psychic phase. Behind them the lascannon on the anti-grav platform finally had a target – by moving slightly, the crew could just see the bulky form of Bjorn the Fell-Handed.

On my right flank the Dire Avengers continued their race to get across the board whilst there were still Space Wolves to kill. Meanwhile, the War Walker moved a fraction to get a clearer line of sight to the Long Fangs.

I began what I hoped would be a bloodbath by firing my lascannon on the anti-grav platform at the ancient Dreadnought. Bjorn was struck again, the searing heat tearing through his armour and ripping off his assault cannon arm!

Next, I tried to reduce the threat posed by the Long Fangs by gunning them down with the War Walker. I forced a break test on them after the lascannon killed one of the Space Wolves armed with a missile launcher. They passed the test which didn't particularly surprise me as Long Fangs are notoriously hard to break. Unfortunately, I couldn't pin-point the rest of the squad so they were safe for another turn.

The Guardians and the jetbike squad shot up the Blood Claws, killing three of the squad who had been blasted out of their cover. Nearby, the Howling Banshees cut down four of their paralysed opponents in the second Blood Claws squad. The survivors of both Space Wolves squads passed their break tests but were

SPACE WOLVES TURN 3

now in no position to threaten my line. The Assassin out-fought the Dreadnought in hand-to-hand combat and Jake decided to use melta bombs to cripple the machine. Two of these thermal charges had no effect and the Assassin was still pinned in combat. Had I known about the melta bombs I might have thought twice about committing the huge machine, but it seemed to be holding its own for the moment.

ELDAR TURN 3

Ten warp cards presented us both with a great opportunity to smash up each other's army. Eldrad began by playing *Doom* on the Assassin. Then, to my surprise, Jake used *Ultimate Force* for Njal to open a *Gate*. This power works by creating an opening in the warp in one place and an exit in another. Through this gateway a individual character or squad can instantly travel across the battlefield. Jake placed one end of the *Gate* a small distance away from Njal and the other end inside my middle bunker and there was nothing I could do to stop him! Eldrad gathered himself to use *Executioner* to fight Njal Stormcaller but Jake threw down *Destroy Power* and stripped me of it. He then tried to place *Iron Arm* on Njal but the Warlock nullified it after Eldrad had failed.

A *Gate* was open into one of my bunkers and it was now Jake's turn to move.

TURN 3 VICTORY POINTS

ELDAR 5 POINTS

SPACE WOLVES 3 POINTS

The Howling Banshees enter from the edge of the table to pounce on the Blood Claws.

SPACE WOLVES TURN 4

SPACE WOLVES TURN 4

Jake: The Space Wolves had been severely mauled by the Howling Banshees, jetbikes and Guardians and I was forced to come up with a desperate plan. I had opened a *Gate* into the central bunker and resolved to capture it and make my last stand there. Space Marines are brilliant at defence and would be hard for the Eldar to winkle out of a bunker. Capturing it would also get me five victory points.

With this in mind, Ragnar Blackmane, Njal Stormcaller and the survivors of one of the Blood Claws battle packs all charged through the *Gate* to capture the bunker in the heart of the Eldar position. The Long Fangs too advanced towards the *Gate* which was overlooked by the protective shadow of the Land Raider.

In the middle of the battlefield, Bjorn was badly damaged but could still fight and ran forwards to assist in the defence of the newly captured position. All this neatly reversed the situation with the Space Wolves now becoming the besieged.

The only firing I had was the twin lascannon mounted on the damaged Land Raider. This was aimed at the bunker on my right in an effort to collapse it and reduce the hiding places left for the Eldar. I knew it was a long shot and wasn't surprised when it failed to penetrate the massive plasticrete sides. I had started the battle with five lascannons and with this number, the chances of destroying a bunker or two with concentrated fire were quite good. However, I now only had one twin mount left and this was only really useful for picking off the odd carelessly placed trooper.

In the hand-to-hand combat phase, the last member of the beleaguered Blood Claws pack tore one apart one of the Howling Banshees with his power fist. Too far away from the *Gate* to escape his fearsome opponents, he screamed his death cry and threw himself at a second Aspect Warrior. He might not survive, but at least he would take some with him!

My Assassin continued to battle against the Eldar Dreadnought which was still standing despite being repeatedly melta bombed. Again he won the combat, and placed two more of the explosive charges against the Dreadnought's legs. The Eldar machine staggered back from the blasts but remained operational and the Assassin quickly followed it up.

The warp flux generated six cards and I began the phase by using *Hellfire* once more, this time on the crew of the anti-grav platform. Both died in the firestorm leaving the weapon useless. Adrian took the *Eldritch Storm* back into his hand.

I rolled again for the Assassin's *Combat Drugs* which stopped working and wounded him into the bargain – I had been lucky not to lose them sooner. Locked in bloody combat with the Dreadnought, faith in the Emperor alone would have to carry him through now.

ELDAR TURN 4

The last of the Long Fangs fail to reach the 'Gate' and are slaughtered by the Swooping Hawks.

ELDAR TURN 4

Adrian: Jake's force was wrecked and all I had to do to win the battle was contain the Space Wolves in the bunker, keep the Assassin occupied and kill some more Space Marines!

There were still enough Long Fangs left to prevent me from achieving my primary objective and they were also worth a lot of victory points so I made them a priority target. They were already running towards the open *Gate,* and the Howling Banshees would take at least two turns to get to there. After considering my plan for the rest of the battle I decided to charge the Howling Banshees at the last of the Blood Claws. To my right, the out of control jetbike continued to career across the table.

Unwilling to restrain the Swooping Hawks any longer I launched an all-out attack. I dive-bombed two of the Long Fangs with these flying Aspect Warriors, working out the effects of the grenades as I dropped them, as we normally do with these troops. Moving Swooping Hawks is fraught with hidden difficulties. They must fly in straight lines and cannot land within one inch of another model, a terrain feature or each other. With all these considerations they could only drop two krak grenades on the Long Fangs as they soared over. These killed one of the Space Marines and I still had three Swooping Hawks to attack the last two Long Fangs with their lasguns and grenades. Of course the Space Wolves passed their break test!

On my right, I moved the War Walker around the hill and took aim at Bjorn while the Dire Avengers at last advanced up to my right hand bunker. Inside this fortress, the last Dark Reaper took up a firing position facing the centre bunker which now contained the surviving Space Wolves. Eldrad moved into a blind spot hidden from any firing from within the bunker. The jetbikes began to circle back towards my deployment zone.

In the shooting phase, I watched in glee as the Swooping Hawks targeted the remaining Long Fangs with krak grenades and lasgun fire, killing them all. Over on the right, the War Walker fired its lascannon at Bjorn. This time, his left arm was destroyed, reducing his attack characteristic by another point. With both arms blown off, Bjorn the Fell-Handed now had no ranged weaponry left except his auto-launchers, and these were loaded with blind grenades!

In the hand-to-hand combat phase, the Howling Banshees cut down the last of the Blood Claws with ease, whilst the Dreadnought and the Assassin continued to brawl. The Assassin won the round of combat and hit the Dreadnought with his fifth and sixth melta bombs. Once again the explosions caused no damage and Jake stared in utter disbelief at his dice!

I rolled five warp cards and began the psychic phase with the Warlock who tried to play *Battle Fate* on my War Walker. Jake nullified the effect and unleashed *Hellfire* on two jetbikes which I nullified in turn. Then an idea struck me. Using three force cards that Eldrad had been storing in his *Staff of Ulthamar* I unleashed the *Eldritch Storm* once more. To Jake's surprise I used it on the bunker containing the last two Blood Claws, Ragnar and Njal. With the force of the storm contained by the bunker walls, the Space Wolves were effectively contained and could neither move or shoot for as long as it remained in play. Jake withdrew the *Gate.*

TURN 4 VICTORY POINTS

ELDAR 10 POINTS

SPACE WOLVES 9 POINTS

The Imperial Assassin destroys the Dreadnought at the height of the fierce struggle for the bunkers.

SPACE WOLVES TURN 5

Jake: By this stage I was running out of men to move, especially as most of the survivors were stuck in an *Eldritch Storm* and could neither move or fire! The heavily damaged Bjorn charged at the Dire Avengers but fell short of his prey by half an inch!

With no more worthwhile targets in sight, the Iron Priest in the Land Raider continued to fire at the bunkers but without effect. Fighting back, Adrian's Dreadnought won the hand-to-hand combat and struck the Assassin who deftly dodged the blow.

Only three cards were dealt from the warp and both of mine were nullifies. Firstly I tried to nullify the *Eldritch Storm* that immobilised my men – and failed. Adrian hadn't enough cards to use a power so I had another turn and this time successfully nullified the *Doom* which had been placed on my Assassin in turn 3.

SPACE WOLVES TURN 5

ELDAR TURN 5

Adrian: After a very short Space Marine turn I began to consolidate my position. As the last out of control jetbike flew off the board, I declared a charge by my Warlock Master against Bjorn the Fell-Handed. All of my unengaged squads converged on the bunkers including the Guardian squad who ran into the cover of the fortification containing the abandoned lascannon. The Swooping Hawks flew to the other side

of the hill away from the crippled Land Raider, and the Dire Avengers backed away from Bjorn. No one was in a position to shoot.

The Warlock beat Bjorn in hand-to-hand combat and inflicted a single Strength 7 hit with his *Singing Spear*. Unfortunately, I didn't have any force cards stored in it to increase the strength of the blow and, although I could have penetrated Bjorn's armour my dice roll was too low and it bounced off. The Imperial Assassin again beat my Dreadnought, this time smashing him with four more melta bombs. As the final explosion boomed out, the machine's legs buckled and it collapsed in a broken tangle of wreckage. The Assassin was now free to move again and I expected him to try and attack Eldrad once more. Much to my relief, Jake used the Assassin's follow-up move to place him further away from Eldrad. Then it dawned on me where he was heading – the bunker containing my Guardian squad.

ELDAR TURN 5

I rolled a total of eight warp cards for the turn, but first we dealt with the psychic power already in play. The Space Marines in the centre bunker were smashed about by the *Eldritch Storm* but all survived uninjured. As I surveyed my Warlock's powers, I suddenly noticed *Destructor*. Although I'd commanded Eldar armies in many battles, for some reason I'd never used this power before – with the Warlock in combat with Bjorn I now saw the perfect opportunity to unleash it. The *Destructor* struck the Dreadnought with a S6 hit which wasn't very strong, but it was another chance to try to topple Bjorn. The dice weren't high enough to penetrate his armour but the power remained in play until nullified so I would probably get another chance next turn.

Then Jake tried another gamble. He opened a *Gate* in Njal's bunker and placed the opening in the bunker with the Dark Reaper! Should one of the Space Wolves be blown through the *Gate* by the *Eldritch Storm* next turn, the Dark Reaper would find himself fighting a round of hand-to-hand combat. Njal cast *Hellfire* which he didn't need line of sight to use and placed it on the Dire Avengers. I used *Reflection* to rebound the template back at the psyker, and it ended up covering both the Warlock and Bjorn. The Dreadnought was unaffected but the Warlock sustained a S5 hit which nearly wounded him.

Then I noticed that my jetbikes had their backs to the Land Raider and the Iron Priest had his finger on the trigger of the lascannons!

TURN 5 VICTORY POINTS

ELDAR 10 POINTS

SPACE WOLVES 11 POINTS

SPACE WOLVES TURN 6

Jake: As I still hadn't been able to nullify the *Eldritch Storm* I only had two models left who could move and fire. Each would have to maximise the victory points they could get in this last turn. I began with the Assassin who charged the bunker containing Adrian's Guardians. I couldn't capture this fortification but at least I had a chance of destroying it!

With the bunker he had been firing at now allotted to the Assassin to destroy, the Iron Priest switched targets to the jetbikes, hitting a rider and killing him easily with the twin lascannons. This took the jetbike squad over fifty percent casualties and earned me another victory point.

Although it had taken ten melta bombs to kill the Dreadnought, they were still the best weapon I had against fortifications and so the Assassin used them to attack the bunker. The first didn't scratch the plasticrete surface but the second shook the whole structure. With the bunker weakened, I attacked with a third melta bomb but this exploded harmlessly like the first. I had one attack left and I really needed it to work. The Assassin placed the last of the melta bombs and stood back as it detonated. A mighty explosion ripped the bunker apart and the remains of the armoured walls crashed in on its hapless occupants. The bunker was completely destroyed and the Guardians inside all took hits from the falling rubble which wiped out the entire squad. Four more desperately needed victory points to the Space Wolves!

SPACE WOLVES TURN 6

nor the *Destructor* wounded their targets. However, the *Eldritch Storm* was still playing havoc with the beleaguered Space Wolves in the central bunker.

I had placed the *Gate* in the previous turn in the centre of the bunker so that there was a fair chance of at least one of the Space Marines inside being blown through and into contact – and therefore hand-to-hand combat – with the last Dark Reaper. Sadly, this cunning plan failed to bear fruit as the *Eldritch Storm* simply pressed the Space Marines further into the corners of the fortress. Ragnar even had to use his *Aegis suit* to save himself from taking a wound!

Meanwhile, Bjorn's struggle with the Warlock continued. Even though both of his arms had been blown off, Bjorn won the combat and wounded his enemy twice, only to see one of the blows deflected by the conversion field and the other careen off the Warlock's elaborate rune armour!

This turn I rolled a 7 for the number of warp cards dealt. Of the psychic powers that were already in play, neither the *Hellfire*

I played *Destroy Power* on the *Eldritch Storm* and beat Adrian's dice roll to remove it from play and from his hand for the rest of the battle. This was a great relief even if it was a little late in the day.

Adrian retaliated by trying to put *Battle Fate* on his War Walker but I nullified it before it could take effect. I then hit Eldrad with the *Salamander* which failed to wound him.

The heavily-damaged Bjorn the Fell-Handed fights off both Eldrad Ulthran and the Warlock!

ELDAR TURN 6

Adrian: During my last turn I had tried to grab some victory points to ensure a win, but had not been successful. Not only that, but I had handed Jake a victory point on a plate in the form of the jetbike squad which he had taken over fifty percent casualties. This was the last turn in the game and would decide whether I won or lost, so I carefully scanned the battlefield to see what I could kill…

Before I attacked with any of my troops, I moved the jetbike whose rider had been killed by the Land Raider's lascannon last turn. Spinning out of control it smashed into the ground in front of the line of bunkers.

As far as grabbing victory points was concerned, the Swooping Hawks had a slim chance of damaging the Land Raider enough to kill the Iron Priest inside, so I charged them towards it.

Eldrad charged into Bjorn the Fell-Handed to support the Warlock Master and hopefully topple this deadly machine which I had been battering for the whole battle. With both arms gone, it should be easy prey for the combined attacks of these two powerful psykers.

The squad of Howling Banshees and the survivors of the jetbikes trained their guns on the Assassin, now visible over the smoking crater that marked the bunker's remains. I was taking no chances with this deadly foe and lined up all the troops I could to fire a storm of lethal shuriken at this hated warrior.

As I prepared for the slaughter on my left, the Dire Avengers on my right flank retreated. Although they hadn't fired a shot in the battle they were also completely unscathed and I wanted to keep them that way. For this reason they kept their distance from the combat area to avoid any more psychic attacks that Jake might be able to use.

The impressive 'firing squad' I had lined up to kill the Assassin opened fire and the air sang with the hiss of hundreds of shuriken. To my complete amazement, the Assassin emerged from this storm of death totally unharmed and Jake breathed a sigh of relief. The Swooping Hawks also failed to damage their target as their krak grenades barely scratched the Land Raider's armour. In the centre, Bjorn the Fell-Handed hit both the Warlock and Eldrad in hand-to-hand combat but the psykers' displacer and conversion fields saved them from being wounded by the blows.

I rolled six warp cards and then diced for the various psychic effects in play. None of the powers inflicted any damage, leaving Bjorn, the Warlock and Eldrad safe. Eldrad then used *Guide* on the last Dark Reaper to fire one final frag missile at the bunker containing the Space Wolves, hoping to find the vision slit and cause havoc inside. Predictably, the missile hit the bunker itself and had no effect on the armoured sides.

With this last attack, the game was over.

TURN 6 VICTORY POINTS

ELDAR 16 POINTS

SPACE WOLVES 16 POINTS

ELDAR TURN 6

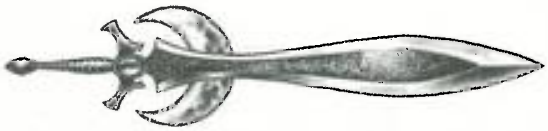
ELDAR CONCLUSION

Oh no! I can't believe it! After several hours of some of the most bitter fighting I have ever seen, it was a draw!

I have no complaints about this battle, apart from not winning of course. However, I can see now how close to victory I was. There were four mistakes that cost me the battle. Firstly, I must always hide troops at the start of a battle! Next, when I used the Dreadnought to fire on the Land Raider I should have declared the maximum power setting. This would have increased my chances of damaging the tank and maybe killing the Iron Priest, who denied me some easy victory points. Thirdly, I should have committed my Swooping Hawks to close combat with the Land Raider a turn sooner instead of taking cover. Finally, and probably most foolishly, I gave away a single victory point by allowing the Iron Priest a clear line of sight to the Guardian jetbikes. This really meant the difference between draw and victory. I now keep a running total of victory points during my games so I can keep track of how I am doing.

Eldar are certainly a good force for using psychic powers and I always enjoy the 'card fencing' that takes place during the psychic phases of a battle. During the first half of the game I seemed to spend most of my time nullifying Jake's attacks. However, when Jake opened the *Gate* to get Ragnar, the Blood Claws and Njal into the central bunker, he used *Ultimate Force* so I wasn't allowed to nullify it! On the other hand, the *Daemonic Attack* on the psyker champion was a joy. It's the only time I have ever managed to kill a psyker with that particular card and I was quite relieved I didn't have it used on me later in the game (as an Ork player I usually have little to fear from *Daemonic Attack* as Weirdboyz are only in danger from this card if the enemy rolls a 6 on a D6 first).

During the second half of the battle, *Eldritch Storm* proved itself to be more than just a way of knocking troops out of cover. The Space Wolves were effectively contained in the bunker for the rest of the battle and Njal in particular was unable to use many of his powers as he had no line of sight. Playing *Destructor* on Bjorn was a pleasant surprise even though it failed to do any damage. During a drawn-out close combat this power could be very effective.



It's interesting that this game turned out to be a draw. I've noticed that when you play a game of Warhammer 40,000 a whole series of events, either bad dice rolls or freak effects, will usually cause one side's downfall. This is particularly true if you play together quite often and know each other's style of play.

When Jake's Land Raider blew up in turn 1 it looked as if the game was up before we had started. However, because of the extended game length, Jake was able to claw his way out of a hole to get a draw – and I take my hat off to him!

Overall I enjoyed this longer game and certainly learned that "the best form of defence is attack!".

SPACE WOLVES DEBRIEFING

So close, so close... but still another draw against Adrian! What a battle. We knew when we were playing this that it was really close, but we only added up the victory points after the battle was over – the points at the end of each turn were worked out as we wrote up this report. This added to the tension and made it more exciting (and frustrating) as we both desperately struggled for any edge and every victory point.

I began the game with possibly the worst turn I've ever had in a game of Warhammer 40,000. Little more could have gone wrong. This considered, I feel that I actually did rather well to pull myself up by my boot-straps and scrabble back to a draw by the end of the battle.

The game was rather unusual because we each achieved both our primary and secondary objectives. Normally, if one side manages to get their objectives then they will have beaten their opponent in the process and will usually win the game.

Adrian proved himself a more than worthy opponent and he had his share of bad luck too. The dreaded Warp Spiders were particularly unlucky to run away before they could do anything. Adrian was being cautious with them, holding them in reserve until I had closed the range, rather than letting me target them from turn 1. This was a good plan for the Eldar, and left me with the tricky problem of dealing with them at close range once I had run the gauntlet of the rest of the Eldar army. Watching them flee from the battlefield as the Assassin cast off his disguise was hugely enjoyable.

Each of us had both excellent and abysmal luck in equal shares but in the end it all balanced itself out. All of our cunning plans and devious tricks cancelled themselves out too and we were left with a draw – so much for total victory!

A BITTER HARVEST

By Fred Reed and Adrian Wood

For this exciting battle report Fred Reed, winner of the Golden Demon Space Marine Trophy, commanded his Howling Griffons Space Marines against the unstoppable horde of the Waaagh! Ork lead by Warboss Adrian Wood.

Procon Secundus had been a quiet place, simple colonists digging a bare living out of the unforgiving rock. Nothing ever happened there. Then the Orks came.

Without warning, the sledgehammer assault of the Waaagh! Ork descended on the colony, and before the Imperial forces could act most of their troops had been cut off and destroyed. As the capital fell and the Ork tanks rolled through the shattered streets, rumbling over the broken bodies of the defenders, a single Imperial Astropath managed a brief signal for help. A lone voice calling for the Emperor's mercy from across the depths of the warp.

Even as he did so, he was cut down by the raking bolterfire of the Orks who smashed into the inner chambers of his tower. The loyal guardians of the Imperium – the Adeptus Arbites, had sold their lives dearly protecting their one chance for aid but it had not been enough. There were too many Orks, and though a hundred fell for every man the Arbites lost they still came on. The aid would come but it would be too late for the brave Arbites.

To this embattled hellhole the Space Marines came. The Emperor's finest warriors, Space Marines of the Howling Griffons Chapter. But as they readied themselves for battle aboard their giant spacecraft, things were not all well. Violent warpstorms delayed them at every turn as if the dark forces of Chaos had joined with the Orks to frustrate the Imperial reinforcements. Weeks passed and the Space Marine Commanders grew concerned at the lack of reports from Procon Secundus and could only assume the worst.

Back on the colony, the main Ork army had split into dozens of roving battlegroups, hunting down the scattered remnants of the Imperial Guard. Dozens of small, bitterly fought firefights raged across the entire continent. Battles for strategic outposts, important supplies or simply for survival. No quarter was asked and none expected from the rampaging hordes of Orks, but no matter how many were killed they still came on. Slowly, but surely, the final glimmers of resistance were being stamped out.

Just as everything looked hopeless, just as the Imperial defenders began to doubt their faith, the Space Marines landed. Cutting through the unprepared Orks they crushed each group as they found them. Orbital auguries pinpointed the concentrations of Ork forces and each was sought out and destroyed in turn as the cleansing of the colony began.

Typical of these small but brutal firefights was the battle fought through the smouldering ruins of the western suburbs of the capital. Detachments of Howling Griffons Space Marines were sent to intercept and destroy a powerful Ork psyker...

INTRODUCTION

On the back cover of last month's issue of White Dwarf, you might have seen the huge Howling Griffon army painted by Fred Reed from our Bristol store. Fred won the coveted Space Marine Trophy at this year's Golden Demon and we are sure to be seeing more of his excellent work in the future.

With well over six thousand points of models to choose from Fred had a bit of difficulty in deciding what to take to fight against Adrian's Orks. After much deliberation he settled on the army you see in the following pages.

If you want to see this impressive army for yourself then just pop down to the Bristol store and take a look! Fred will be more than happy to talk to you about painting Space Marines or any Citadel Miniatures, or about the different army tactics in Warhammer 40,000.

As usual with the games that we fight out at the Studio, Fred and Adrian played on an eight by four foot table with the scenery you see in the photographs. Adrian used the Studio's Ork army which isn't big enough to allow Fred to take his entire battle company and so the game was played with forces of 2000 points a side.

In Adrian's own army he uses a lot of bikes as he explained last month in his article on Speed Freaks. However, we decided to make the battle more of a challenge by only allowing him what we had in the miniatures cabinets at the Studio, forcing him to adapt to the equipment he had at hand in the way that a real commander would. Both armies were chosen before they picked Mission cards so that they would have to consider all of the possible objectives they may be set. This meant that the armies had to be good at everything and not just a specialised force that could only do one thing.

The battle took place amongst the shattered ruins of the ravaged Imperial colony of Procon Secundus. Space Marines of the Howling Griffons Chapter had been alerted to a massive Ork assault but had been delayed by violent warp storms and by the time they arrived the planetary defences had been overrun. But even now small pockets of resistance fought bravely on and it was to one of these that the Howling Griffons had come. The beleaguered defenders had greeted the Space Marines with unsuppressed joy and had redoubled their efforts against the Ork invaders.

In this game we decided that a force of Howling Griffons had been dispatched from one of the surviving enclaves to remove the most powerful Warphead in the service of the Ork Warboss. The Orks, for their part, were simply intent on killing anything that moved…

WAAAGH THE ORKS!

By Adrian Wood

The last time I fought against Space Marines with the hordes of Ghazghkull Thraka was in White Dwarf 167. That particular conflict was a very small engagement which ended as a draw, and I was determined that this time would be different. My adversary for this battle was Golden Daemon winner Fred Reed from our Bristol store, commanding his superbly painted Howling Griffons army.

The first choice for my army was the Warboss – the infamous Ghazghkull Thraka himself with his sidekick and Battle Standard Bearer, Makari. Once I had taken his compulsory Wargear cards, the *Kustom Blasta* and *Adamantium Skull*, I added a *Sniffer Squig* to complete his equipment.

My next choice was a Painboy, equipped with the *Vaxxine Squig* to avoid the deadly effects of a *Virus Outbreak* or virus grenades. My Mekaniak had built a Shokk Attack Gun and a *Scanner*. I love Shokk Attack teams and took as many Snotlings as we had painted as ammunition! I also chose a Weirdboy Warphead together with a regular Weirdboy in order to increase the number of Ork psychic powers I would have. The Weirdboy also took a *Weirdboy Staff* to protect him from the unpleasant effects of the 'Edbangerz Table and stop his head exploding! These wargear cards are essential purchases as far as I am concerned and I seldom if ever go to battle without them.

As far as the mobs are concerned, my favourite Boyz are the Blood Axe Kommandos. When they are fully tooled up with power axes they are expensive at twenty points each, but they are well worth it. With their ability to infiltrate the battlefield they really tie up the enemy and can also slice up vehicles with their Power Axes. Stormboyz are endless fun and can really take the battle to the enemy with their jump packs. Also at twenty points the Stormboyz' Drillboss has a Leadership of nine, just like a normal Warboss. This gives Stormboyz real staying power, particularly as they often operate away from the Warboss and Battle Standard.

The third mob I took were the Deathskulls – heavy weapon specialists armed with a wide variety of lethal wargear. Last, but by no means least, came the Goffs. These fearsome Orks are renowned for their love of close combat and their single-minded strategy – charge!

With all the Orks ready for battle, the Gretchin refused to be left out of the fight so I took two mobs of ten models. Although not individually as dangerous as the Orks, Gretchin can be battle winners, absorbing enemy fire meant for their Ork masters. If I advanced behind a screen of Gretchin this would enable my main force to reach the Space Marines' lines without taking too many casualties. Once in contact, the brutal tactics of the Goffs would carry them through.

To my mind, no Ork Army is complete without a Dreadnought. The Painboy and Mekaniak who had constructed mine had equipped it with both a lascannon to destroy enemy vehicles and heavy bolter to mow down the Space Marines themselves. With this deadly combination, my Dreadnought could stride across the battlefield laying waste to anything that stood in its way.

Before the battle began, I had been able to take a look at Fred's army so I had been able to marvel at the assembled might of an entire Space Marine Company! As we had set the size of the armies at 2000 points Fred wouldn't be able to take anything like an entire company, so although I would have to face lots of Space Marines I wouldn't have to fight against the wide variety of vehicles I knew he had painted up. I had to think of a way to counter this and my immediate thought was to take as many of Da Big Gunz as I could.

My first selection was a Smasha Gun to attack the Howling Griffons' Dreadnoughts and vehicles. The Traktor Kannon is great because you don't have to roll to hit! My last choice was the Splatta Gun which I decided to take for its unpredictability. You can never tell how far the shell will bounce as it careers madly about the battlefield, but I was sure that it would be fun to use and add some extra excitement to the Ork shooting!

Another essential purchase for my army was buggies and bikes and so I took everything I could get my hands on. As I explained in my article called **Speed Freaks** last month, my own Ork army has lots of vehicles. Unfortunately the Studio army is less well supplied with Wartraks and Warbikes but you can't always have what you want in a battle!

With my army chosen, I drew two Strategy cards – *Craven Cowardice* which would be of little use against the Space Marines, and the excellent *Crack Shot*.

DA PLAN

Engage and Destroy is one of my favourite missions but *Witch Hunt* is the one I dread facing the most. I nearly always have problems with it, as was shown in the battle report of the same name in White Dwarf 171. In order to protect my Warphead I decided to set up with a defensive wall of heavy weapons across the centre of the battlefield. This would dissuade the Space Marines from charging straight forwards and would hopefully form a curtain of fire behind which the Warphead could sit for the duration.

The rest of the army would split up to attack in a pincer movement along both flanks. This is a favourite tactic of mine, out-flanking the enemy and crushing them in a vice-like grip of Ork ferocity. This would prove a little harder as I had fewer Warbikes than I am used to but I could see how it could still work, even if the slower moving side only acted as a decoy.

All I had to do now was see how Fred would place his troops. It is possible for a good set-up to be wrecked by the enemy's careful deployment and as the Orks nearly always set up first you have to get used to altering your plans!

ORK ARMY (2000 points)

DA BOYZ

DREADNOUGHT
with a lascannon, heavy bolter and 2 power claws.

WARBOSS
Warboss **Ghazghkull Thraka** with his Gretchin Standard Bearer **Makari**.

WARPHEAD
Weirdboy Warphead with an *Aegis Suit* and four **Minderz**.

WEIRDBOY
Weirdboy with **two Minderz**.

PAINBOY
Painboy with a *Vaxxine Squig*.

2 GRETCHIN MOBS
Each of **10 Gretchin** with autoguns.

BLOOD AXE KOMMANDOS
7 Blood Axe Kommandos lead by a **Kommando Kaptin**.

STORMBOYZ MOB
8 Stormboyz lead by a **Drillboss** and all equipped with a jump packs.

GOFF MOB
6 Goff Boyz and **2 Skarboyz** lead by **2 Goff Nobz** in 'Eavy armour.

DA BUGGIES

WARTRAK
Wartrak with a lascannon.

SCORCHER
Scorcher with a heavy flamer.

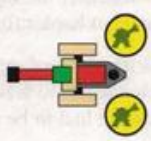
WARBIKES
2 Warbikes with twin autocannons.

DA BIG GUNZ

DEATHSKULLS MOB
5 Deathskull Boyz equipped with 2 heavy bolters, 2 heavy stubbers and a heavy plasma gun. They are lead by a **Nob**.

TRAKTOR KANNON
with **2 Gretchin** krew.

SMASHA GUN
with **2 Gretchin** krew.



SPLATTA GUN
with **2 Gretchin** krew.

MEKANIAK
Mekaniak equipped with Shokk Attack Gun and *Scanner*.

RUNTHERD
Runtherd. with **7 Snotling** bases.

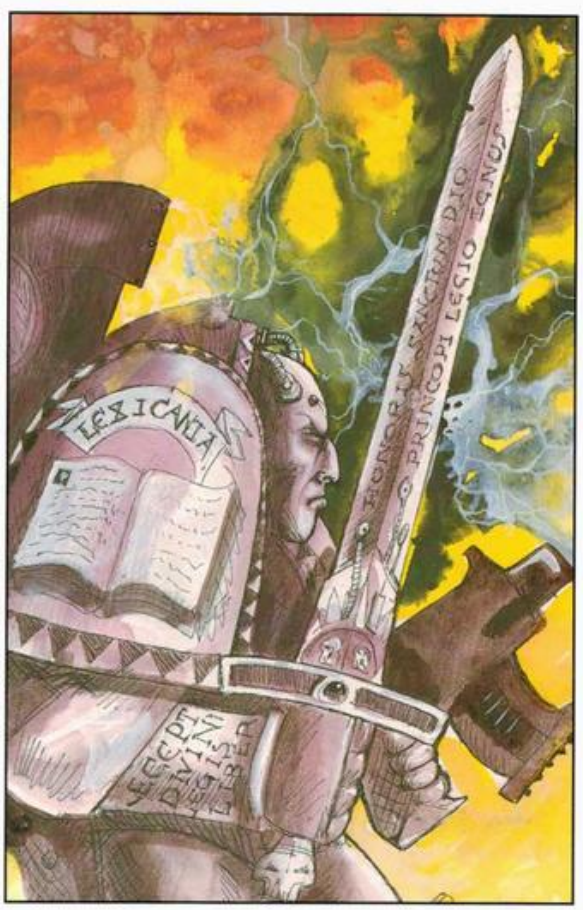
SPACE MARINE BRIEFING

By Fred Reed

After painting an entire Battle Company of Howling Griffons Space Marines, I was really pleased to be invited up to the Studio to fight a battle with them. I nearly always command Imperial forces in my games of Warhammer 40,000 and I was happy to be facing the alien hordes of the Orks to prove once more who was mightiest – at least that was the plan!

As you can see from the photograph on the back of last issue, the Howling Griffon army I've painted is quite large. You can understand then, that I wasn't so pleased when I was told that I would have to take on the advancing Ork hordes with a very, very thin red and yellow line (you don't get many Space Marines for only 2000 points). It was a difficult task to whittle down my choices but in after much deliberation I managed to come up with a still balanced, but much smaller force.

When you are fighting Orks only one thing is certain: there are going to be loads of them, all hiding behind Gretchin. This single thought informed the majority of my choices. I was going to need lots of sustained fire weapons and weapons with large area effects.



My first choice was a Tactical squad. This was equipped with a missile launcher and a plasma gun, and when split into two combat squads would be quite flexible. My next choice was a Devastator squad which was well equipped to slaughter Orks. Two heavy bolters would be able to slow down the advancing wave of Ork Boyz and my heavy plasma gun and lascannon should be able to destroy any troublesome Ork bikes. Even if Adrian was able to conceal his vehicles behind the terrain these weapons would serve equally well to cut down his charging Boyz.

In addition to these heavier troopers, I always take a squad or two of Space Marine Scouts. These warriors are not yet fully fledged Space Marines but with their ability to infiltrate the battlefield they form an important part of the Space Marine armies. I chose to equip each of my Scouts with chainswords to give them an edge in hand-to-hand combat, and gave one of them a heavy bolter to cover the rest as they advanced.

Armoured vehicles were next on the list and it took me some time to decide what to take. My army had a painted squadron of three Razorbacks and a Land Raider, but it was a Dreadnought and a Land Speeder that I decided on in the end. The Dreadnought carried an assault cannon and power fist – a fearsome combination which would be ideal against the massed hordes of lightly armoured Orks. The assault cannon rolled a massive three sustained fire dice with the potential of nine hits a turn! Even the power fist carried a storm bolter slung underneath which gave me a total of four sustained fire dice worth of shots with which to slaughter the foe.

My second vehicle was the latest addition to the armoured might of the Space Marines – the brand new Land Speeder. Not content with its already formidable armament I had converted one of mine to carry an assault cannon in addition to its multi-melta. This would add even more sustained fire dice with which I could destroy the advancing Orks and add to the huge destructive power of the multi-melta.

As vehicles tend to attract a great deal of attention I decided to equip mine to survive as much punishment as possible. With this in mind, I added auto-launchers loaded with blind grenades to the Dreadnought to give it some cover if it had to redeploy in the face of the Ork heavy weapons. I also added a *Null Shield* which I hoped would protect it from the worst Adrian's Weirdboyz could throw at it. For the Land Speeder I chose *Reinforced Armour* plus a *Supercharged Engine* in case it needed to get out of trouble quickly. The additional speed would also enable me to reposition the Land Speeder to counteract the biggest threat as the Ork attack unfolded, and make it harder for the Ork Boyz to hit the speeding target.

With most of my points spent, all I needed now was a few characters to lead the Howling Griffons into battle. My first choice had to be a Space Marine Commander who I equipped

HOWLING GRIFFONS SPACE MARINES ARMY (2000 points)

SPACE MARINE COMMANDER

Commander equipped with a power fist, power sword, *Displacer Field*, *Combi-weapon (Bolter-flamer)*, rad grenades and a *Bionic Eye*.

CHAPLAIN HERO

Chaplain Hero equipped with a bolt gun, chainsword, *Toxin Grenades*, and a *Scanner*.

LIBRARIAN

Lexicanian equipped with a *Force Sword*, refractor shield and *Master Crafted Bolt Pistol*.

LIBRARIAN

Chief Librarian equipped with a *Force Axe*, displacer field, Terminator armour and a *Psychic Hood*.

DREADNOUGHT

Dreadnought equipped with assault cannon, auto-launchers (loaded with blind grenades) and a *Null Shield*.

SCOUT SQUAD

4 Scouts equipped with chainswords and a heavy bolter. They are lead into battle by a **Veteran Sergeant**.

TACTICAL SQUAD

9 Space Marines equipped with bolters and power armour. One carries a missile launcher and another has a plasma gun.

They are lead by a **Veteran Sergeant** equipped with a power fist, chainsword and auxiliary grenade launcher.

DEVASTATOR SQUAD

9 Space Marines equipped with bolters and power armour. The squad is equipped with two heavy bolters, a lascannon and a heavy plasma gun.

They are lead by a **Veteran Sergeant who is** equipped with a power fist, chainsword and medi pack.

LAND SPEEDER

Land Speeder equipped with an extra assault cannon, *Reinforced Armour* and a *Supercharged Engine*.

with extra weapons and wargear to make him an even more awesome killing machine. This all made him a large investment in points which I protected with a *Displacer Field* – my favourite defence for valuable characters.

Next I chose one of my favourite models – a Chaplain, who I raised to Hero status and equipped with a *Toxin Grenade* and *Scanner*. With this mixture of wargear he would be able to prise out any Orks that were hidden in cover without having to fight their overwhelming numbers in hand-to-hand combat. His brave example would also inspire any Space Marine squads near him, allowing them to reroll any Leadership-based tests they might fail.

Last, but not least, I took both the company's Librarians. A level one Lexicanian would be useful as a back up, but the main psyker for my army would be the Chief Librarian. In order to protect this important character I gave him Terminator armour, a *Displacer Field* and a *Psychic Hood*.

After I had totalled up my points, I had just enough left to upgrade all the squad Sergeants to veteran status and buy them small amounts of extra wargear.

THE PLAN

Before we began the battle, Adrian and I each drew two Strategy and one Mission card for our armies. The first Strategy card I drew was *Traitor* which I used immediately to add two to my strategy rating. The second was *Look out Sir, AAARGH!* which might well save the life of one of my characters if I remembered to use it in the heat of battle!

When we drew missions, Adrian got *Engage and Destroy* – perfect for the Orks, and I got *Witch Hunt* which was going to cause me problems. As Adrian knew the one character I needed to kill, he was obviously going to hide his Weirdboy Warphead behind a wall of other troops and scenery. This would make it very hard for me to get close enough to target him, especially as I had made the difficult choice to exclude Assault squads equipped with jump packs when I picked my army. I would have to rely on either my vehicles being sufficiently manoeuvrable to get a line of sight to the Warphead, or my psykers being able to destroy him with a psychic power.

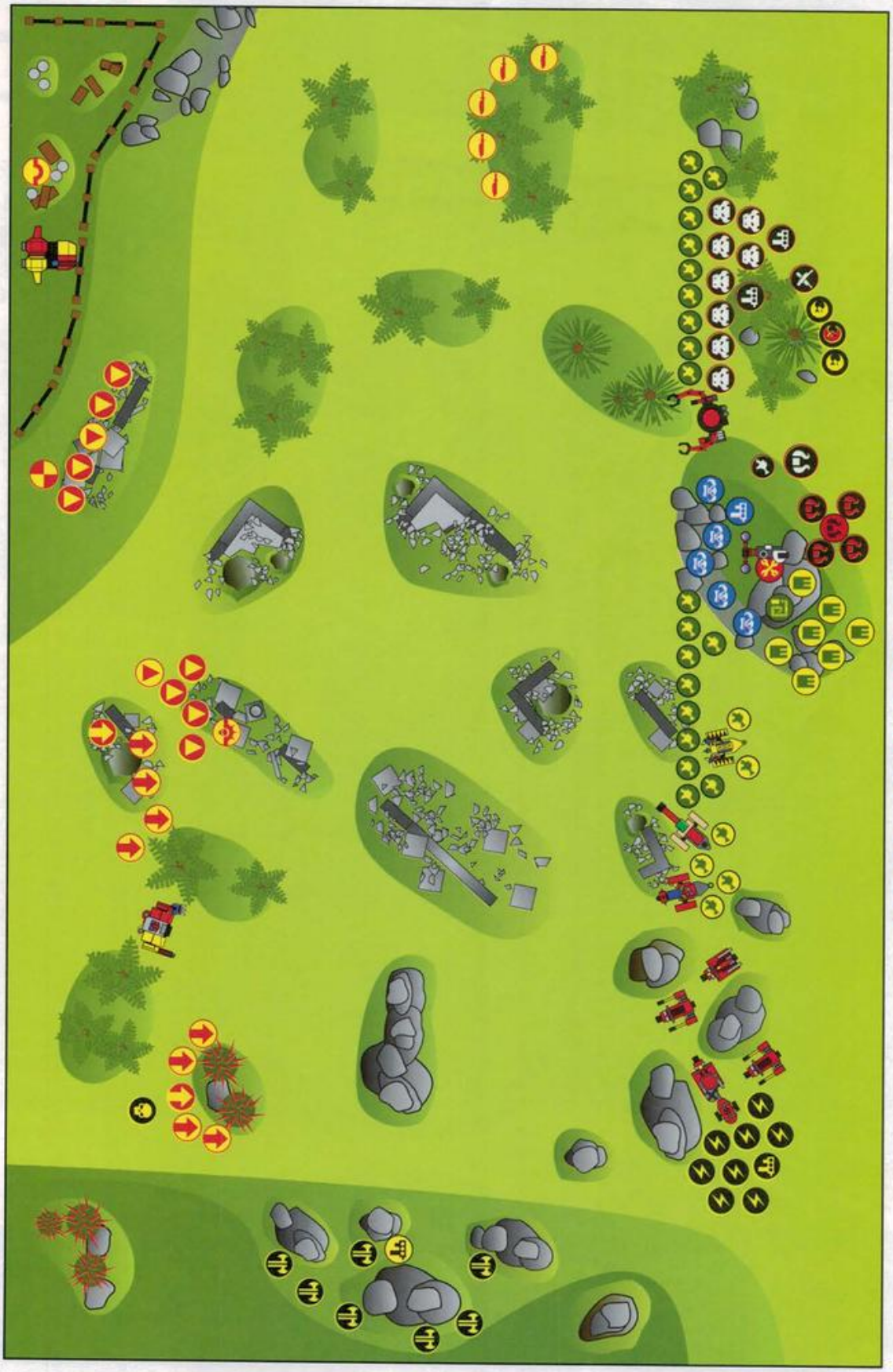
After Adrian had deployed his army I was able to set up in response to his positioning. I put the Devastator combat squad with all of the heavy weapons in the cover of some ruins overlooking the main concentration of Orks. Near them, on the far left of my position, I placed the Land Speeder and Lexicanian. The Land Speeder would be able to sweep down from the hill and engage any Ork forces that advanced into the open, or could wait in reserve, hidden amongst the debris on top of the hill.

The centre of my battleline was held by Space Marines armed mainly with bolt guns. These two combat squads would need to be supported if they were attacked by the Ork vehicles or Dreadnought, but would easily be able to hold their own against a mass of Orks or Gretchin on foot.

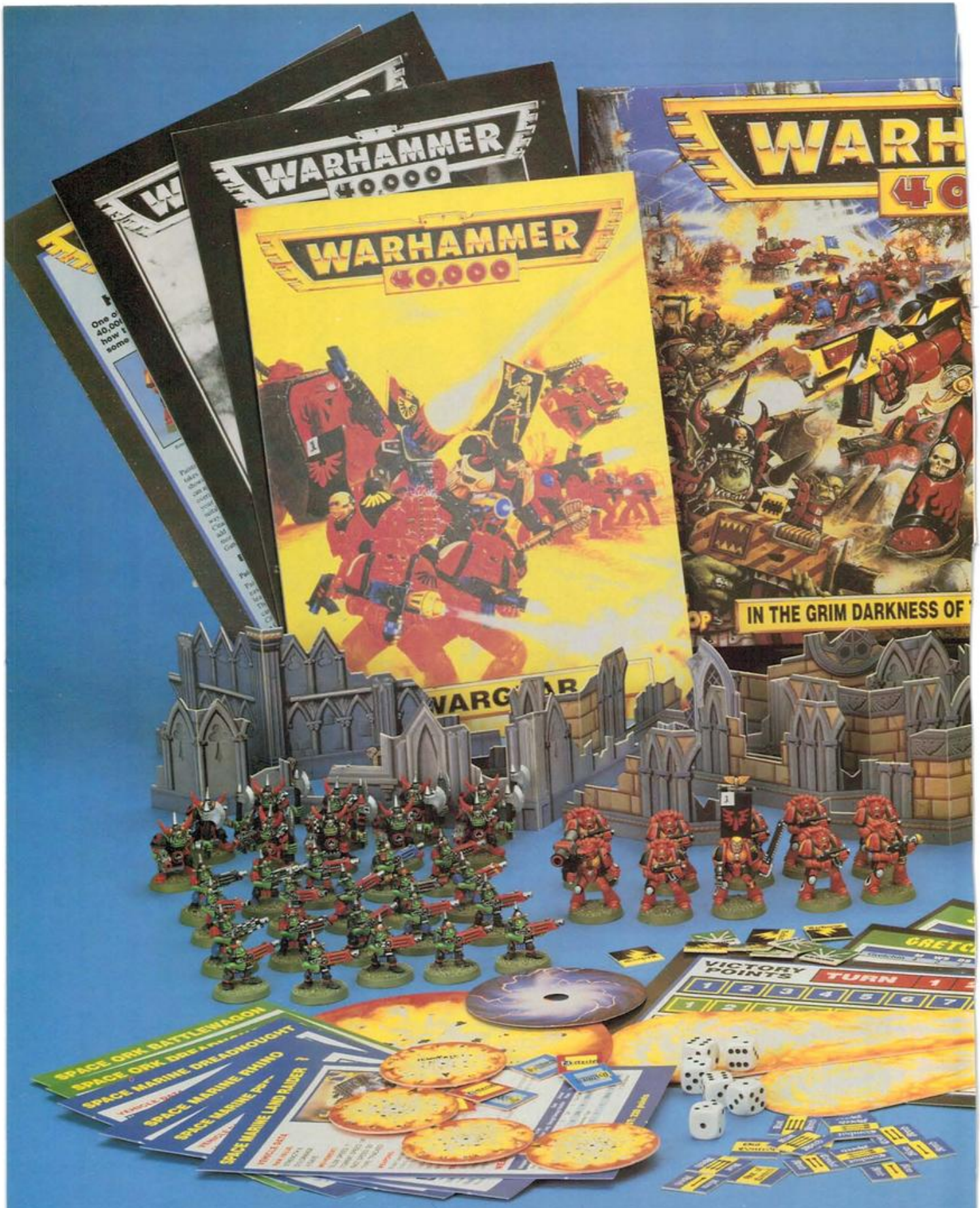
The Dreadnought and the last Tactical squad covered the right flank of my line facing the Ork vehicles. They were supported by the Chaplain Hero who would bolster their morale if they faltered in their devotion to the Emperor.

As we both had troops who were able to infiltrate the battlefield, we diced to see who would deploy them first. Adrian won, and placed his Kommandos amongst the rocks on the hill to the right of my line. I decided to ignore this new threat and put my Scouts far forward on my left. They would get in Adrian's way if he tried to advance with the Orks and Gretchin on that side, and slow up the Ork advance whilst my Devastators on the hill cut the greenskins to pieces with their heavy weapons.

Everything was ready. All I had to do now was pray to the Emperor, chant my battle liturgies in preparation and hope that the Orks would demonstrate their normal inability to hit a barn door from point-blank range whilst I sat back and shot them all to ribbons!



DEPLOYMENT MAP



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WD61

The Land Speeder swoops down towards the attacking Orks and destroys the Dreadnought!

ORK TURN 1

As most of the troops on both sides of the battlefield began the game in hiding, Adrian found that his Deathskulls had nobody to shoot at. Placing them on overwatch, he decided to hold his fire until the Space Marine Devastators revealed themselves…

A few Orks advanced cautiously but most remained where they were, keenly aware that they had to protect their Warphead and that their mission was simply to kill the enemy. There was no need to charge headlong onto the Howling Griffon's guns, they could let the Space Marines come to them. But Adrian had spotted a mistake in Fred's deployment and a single Warbike cautiously emerged from cover to catch the central Tactical Squad carelessly deployed in the open.

To draw out the rest of the Space Marines and to give them something to shoot at, both mobs of Gretchin advanced. Those on the right were followed by the Goffs who were spoiling for a fight and refused to sit on the back line and wait. In the centre of the Ork battleline, the second mob of Gretchin advanced, screening Da Big Gunz from enemy fire.

As the Warbike clattered forwards it opened fire on the foolhardy Space Marines in the open. Its heavy shells thudded into the hapless troopers, cutting down four of the Devastators and one of the Tactical squad. The last Devastator just passed his Break test and crouched behind the ruined walls out of sight.

Over on the hill, the Mekaniak braced himself as his Shokk Attack gun

ORK TURN 1

opened a hole into the blackness of the warp and two scampering groups of Snotlings ran into the tunnel. Across the battlefield, two Space Marines from the second Tactical squad found themselves suddenly covered in terrified Snotlings, biting and clawing in their deranged frenzy. One trooper fought off the hordes of warp-maddened creatures but the other disappeared under their writhing mass.

HOWLING GRIFFONS TURN 1

With little to fire at, Da Big Gunz were silent except for the Splatta Kannon which could pick out the Chief Librarian amongst the rubble. With a mighty roar it launched a whirling splatter shell through the air but the spinning mass of rockets did nothing but ricochet off a wall and run out of steam.

Suddenly a terrified squeal split the air, accompanied by a brilliant flash of multi-coloured light. Two Minderz staggered from behind a tree, eyes blinking as they looked at the crumpled body of their charge. Even with his protective *Weirdboy Staff* the Weirdboy's head had exploded and the energy of the Waaagh! struck the Minderz. Although they survived the blast they were dazed by the death of the Weirdboy and Adrian too shook his head in disbelief.

Bellowing with rage the Warphead drew himself up to his full height and unleashed an *'Edbutz* of pure Orky power at the Howling Griffons' Chief Librarian. The Space Marine countered quickly, attempting to *Destroy Power* but the Warphead was more than able to defend himself and beat back the counterattack.

In return the Warphead tried to prevent the Chief Librarian placing the *Strength of Mind* on himself but failed to nullify the power. Then the Warphead tried to summon the power of the *Waaagh!* only to be nullified by the Chief Librarian! As the invisible struggle between the Chief Librarian and the Warphead reached its peak, Fred remembered the Lexicanian who lashed out with *Smite,* smashing four of the Gretchin who formed the skirmish screen in front of the Goffs. Despite the fact that they were being closely followed by their masters the Gretchin turned and fled.

SPACE MARINE TURN 1

Now it was the Space Marines turn to strike. Taking advantage of the Orks rather hesitant opening moves, Fred decided to waste no time and attack! The Chaplain activated his *Scanner* and detected the outlines of the Blood Axe Kommandos skulking behind the rocks to their right. Barking an order to the nearby Tactical squad, the Space Marines strode forward to flush them out.

Across the battlefield, the ground shook as the huge figure of the Howling Griffons' Dreadnought advanced into the open to avenge his fallen comrades. To the right, the Chaplain was urging forward his battle brothers, and on the left the Tactical Squad stepped over the fallen bodies of their Devastator comrades to take cover in the rubble. The Orks would pay dearly for their blood.

The Space Marine Commander moved across to better direct the fire of the Devastators on the hill against the Ork position. As he moved, the Land Speeder roared overhead, diving down onto the battlefield to centre the Ork Dreadnought in its sights! To the far left of the Space Marine lines, the Scouts crept stealthily forward through the trees, closing in on the unsuspecting Goffs.

The Dreadnought stood resolutely, its weapons trained on the Warbike that had just gunned down five of the Emperor's finest. With vengeful fury it unleashed the deadly force of its weapons on the hapless Ork bikers, but instead of the sound of belt-fed rounds smashing into armour and flesh the Orks rode through the maelstrom without a scratch! Cursing his luck, Fred also fired the storm bolter, but this too ricocheted off the Warbike's feebly armoured hull. In mounting desperation the Dreadnought fired off a pattern of blind grenades to block any line of sight through which the Orks could return fire.

To the Dreadnought's right, the Tactical squad opened fire with their missile launcher at the only vehicle they could see and a krak missile flew across the battlefield, narrowly missing the Scorcher. The rest of the squad threw frag grenades into the concealing rocks to try and flush out the Blood Axe Kommandos Two Orks were caught in the multiple blasts whilst a third was saved as his flak armour absorbed the impact. Finally the Chaplain threw a *Toxin Grenade* for good measure and the lethal cloud engulfed two more Kommandos, killing them instantly. Amidst the explosions and deadly spinning fragments, the Blood Axe Kaptin steadied his Boyz and they passed their Break test and held their ground.

In the centre of the battlefield the Devastators tried to punch a hole through the thin screen of Gretchin in front of the Ork's support weapons, but without much luck. The heavy plasma gun missed the Gretchin completely and the heavy bolter only

ORK TURN 2

killed one of them. But just as Fred began to gnash his teeth in frustration at the number of 1's he was rolling, he noticed something that made up for his bad luck. The Space Marine carrying the lascannon could see nothing but a lone figure on the horizon... A shimmering, incandescent beam burned through the air and the Mekaniak carrying the Shokk Attack gun was knocked sprawling on the ground with a gaping hole in his chest.

With a hiss of super-heated air the Land Speeder opened fire on the Ork Dreadnought with its multi-melta. The shot struck the machine dead centre and its armoured chassis melted away, reducing the once proud Dreadnought to a heap of slag. On the left the Scouts opened fire on the Goffs whose Gretchin screen was now cowering behind them. In a highly accurate blaze of bolter fire the Scouts cut down eight of the Orks reducing the terrified mob to a single Skarboy and a Nob!

As the firing died down the Howling Griffons' Chief Librarian attempted to deliver the devastating power of a *Vortex*. However, instead of unleashing a swirling maelstrom of destructive energy he found himself under *Daemonic Attack*. Adrian's smile faded as the Space Marine fought off the malevolent force, but he had more tricks up his sleeve. Barely had the Librarian recovered when he was struck by an *'Edbutz* but he escaped this too with the aid of his *Strength of Mind*. After this concentrated onslaught the beleaguered Chief Librarian was unable to maintain his concentration and couldn't unleash any more power. Aware of the lapse in power the Warphead gambled on a *Psychic Duel*. Unfortunately for Adrian, the Chief Librarian had recovered enough to beat the Warphead and he was forced to discard *Power Vomit*.

TURN 1 VICTORY POINTS

ORKS: 1 POINT

SPACE MARINES: 5 POINTS

ORK TURN 2

Whilst Adrian pondered his next moves Fred rolled for the effects of the grenades he had thrown in the previous turn. The *Toxin Grenade* shrank to half its size and the clouds of blind smoke drifted apart, creating a fire corridor through which the Orks could see the Dreadnought.

Adrian's first action was to redeploy his vehicles. The lead Warbike remained in position whilst the second moved to target the Tactical squad near the Chaplain. The Wartrak pinpointed the Dreadnought through the gap in the blind clouds and the Scorcher remained protected at the back. Bloodied but unbroken, the Kommandos advanced, steadying their aim on the nearest Tactical squad.

At the back of the Ork lines, the Stormboyz were getting ready. With as much discipline as they could muster, they fired up their jump packs and leapt towards the enemy. Unfortunately, one of the makeshift contraptions blew up in mid air and another jump pack exploded as the Stormboyz landed. Undaunted by their losses, the Stormboyz remained in good order and readied themselves to fire.

At the other end of the battleground the Weirdboy's Minderz abandoned his shattered body and moved forward into cover, whilst the Goffs quickly retreated from the killing ground they had blundered into. In the centre, the Gretchin rounded an outcrop of blasted rubble and took aim at the Land Speeder.

On the hill at the back, Makari moved forwards slightly. This would make him the nearest target to the Devastators rather than Ghazghkull who was standing behind him taking careful aim at the Scouts who'd mown down his brave Goffs. As Ghazghkull squeezed the trigger he found himself engulfed in smoke as a deafening explosion rocked the hill. Makari watched stunned as the billowing smoke cleared to reveal the enraged Warlord clutching the trigger and a few mangled wires. To his disgust his prized *Kustom Blasta* had misfired and blown itself apart.

Looking out over the battlefield, Adrian decided that the biggest threat to the Orks was the Land Speeder and the whole of his right flank now took great pains to eradicate the vehicle. The Gretchin and the Deathskull's heavy bolter opened fire on the skimmer in a fusillade of gunfire but every shot missed! In

The Blood Axe Kommandos lead the Ork attack.

a final effort to destroy the Imperial vehicle, the Deathskull armed with a heavy plasma gun took careful aim. The blast smashed through the vehicle's armour and the Land Speeder exploded spectacularly in mid air, trailing debris as the smoking hulk crashed into the jungle. The Orks let out a cheer and Adrian breathed a sigh of relief.

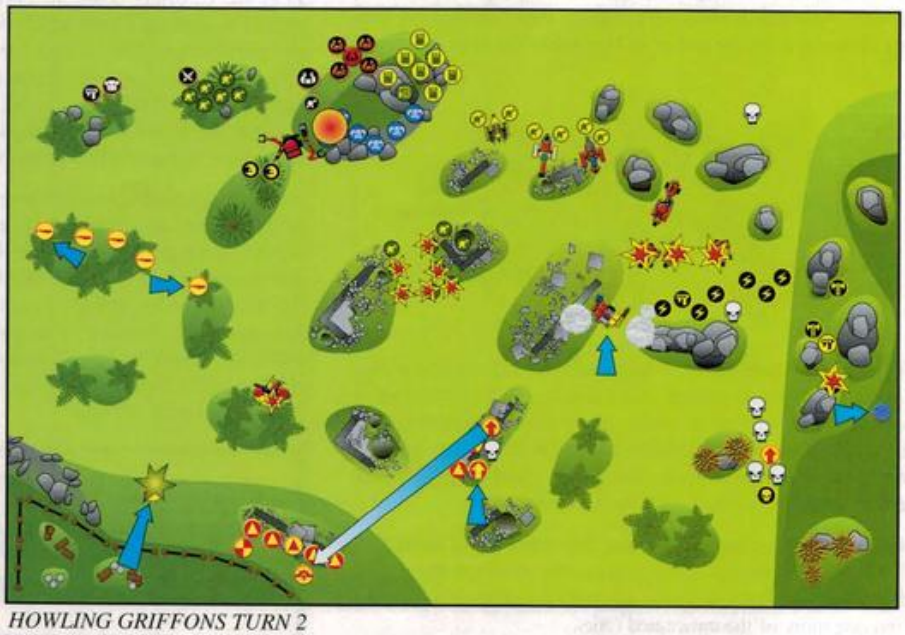
On the other flank the Ork vehicles fired in unison at the Space Marines facing them. Shot after shot bounced off the Dreadnought and chewed up the ground around the Space Marines but only one of the troopers with the Chaplain was killed. Three more Space Marines fell to the Stormboyz and Kommandos' fire but they passed their Break test. The Chaplain himself was struck by bolter shells but they all ricocheted off his ornate armour.

The energy released from the warp this turn was very weak and as the Warphead attempted to *'Edbutz* the Chief Librarian the power drifted away without effect. Finally the Gretchin in the cover of the trees passed their morale check and looked around to see if it was all over yet.

SPACE MARINE TURN 2

Much to Adrian's relief, the cloud of toxin drifted away from the Blood Axe Kommandos and out of harm's way.

The Howling Griffons advanced again, lead by their characters. Under the direction of the Chief Librarian, the Tactical squad in the centre of the battlefield readied itself to



HOWLING GRIFFONS TURN 2

The Space Marines Dreadnought advances menacingly towards the Orks.

fire at the centre of the Ork battleline spread out before them. On the left, the Lexicanian moved cautiously forward to the edge of the hill from where he could see the Scouts spread out below him as they stalked the remaining Orks through the dense jungle.

At the forefront of the Space Marine attack stood the Dreadnought. The mighty war machine strode through the billowing clouds from its own blind grenades and took careful aim at the Warbikes. Servos whirred and targeters clicked as the multi-barrelled weapon sought out its prey. The ancient warrior inside the armoured carapace was determined that none should escape the power of his assault cannon.

With a mighty roar the Dreadnought fired, killing one of the Warbike's drivers instantly and damaging the Wartrak's controls as the explosive shells ripped into the helpless Ork vehicles. The last Warbike escaped the fury of the Dreadnought only to be blasted by a krak missile from the last Tactical trooper accompanying the Chaplain.

The Chaplain Hero himself ignored the vehicles and continued to slaughter the Blood Axe Kommandos amongst the rocks. With deadly accuracy he threw another frag grenade which cut down one more of the concealed Orks.

In the centre of the battlefield, the Chief Librarian directed the fire against the Gretchin screen guarding the Orks' support weapons but missed them all. The Space Marines with him were more accurate killing three of the unfortunate greenskins. Following their lead, the Devastators on the hill also fired at the Gretchin and their two heavy bolters churned up the ground around the diminutive orkoids, killing another three and forcing a Break test on the mob. Adrian rolled double 6's and groaned as the remaining members of the mob turned to run for cover, leaving one lone Gretchin stranded in the open. Fred had carefully positioned the Devastators' heavy plasma gunner so that the Deathskulls were his nearest target and not the battered Gretchin. Before they knew what was happening two of the Orks were engulfed in a ball of incandescent plasma and went to join Mork and Gork. Finally, as if to balance the carnage the Space Marines had inflicted on the Orks' centre, the Scouts in the jungle missed everything they shot at!

After the devastation of the shooting phase there was a calm as both Adrian and Fred surveyed their warp cards for the forthcoming psychic conflict. Firstly, the Chief Librarian *Teleported* across the battlefield to join the Devastators. Then the Warphead spotted the Lexicanian who had walked right into range of *'Eadbutz*. The unfortunate psyker was killed instantly, unable to defend himself against the raw energy of the Waaagh! Dismayed by this result, Fred played *Energy Drain* and ended the turn.

TURN 2 VICTORY POINTS

ORKS: 7 POINTS

SPACE MARINES: 6 POINTS

ORK TURN 3

Adrian's support weapons still had very few targets so he placed them on overwatch in case the Dreadnought or the Space Marines chose to advance. The riderless Warbike careered out of control and exploded whilst the second knocked down a Stormboy and crashed into some rocks. The lone Gretchin in the centre who had been standing in the open now took to his heels. He managed to join his companions in cover and they began to pull themselves together.

ORKS TURN 3

As the Warbikes skidded and crashed, the damaged Wartrak screeched to a halt, taking aim at the towering Dreadnought just in front of it. On the right flank, the surviving Orks and Gretchin ganged up on the Scouts whilst on the left the Stormboyz used their jump packs to leap over the last Tactical trooper and the Chaplain. One of the Stormboyz ended up being impaled on the spikes of a deadly cactus but the rest turned at the end of their jumps and surrounded the two Space Marines. From the hill on their left, the Blood Axe Kommandos moved out of the rocks to join the fray.

The ramshackle remains of the Orks' right flank concentrated their remaining fire on the Scouts. Amid the chattering of wildly aimed shots the Scout carrying the heavy bolter was felled by the Goff Nob.

From the hill the remaining Deathskulls opened fire at the Space Marines amidst the cover of the ruins. Most of their fire went wide, but the heavy plasma gun was bang on target and slew one more of the Howling Griffons' troopers.

On the Orks' left, the Wartrak missed the Dreadnought from point blank range. The Stormboyz killed the last of the Tactical squad, cutting down the trooper with the missile launcher as revenge for their fallen comrades. The Kommandos' fire was just as accurate and wounded the Chaplain Hero.

Yet again the dice roll for warp flux was low and the psychic phase helped neither side as both the Warphead's *'Edbutz* and the Chief Librarian's *Teleport* were each nullified in turn.

SPACE MARINE TURN 3

The lethal cloud from the toxin grenade finally disappeared whilst the blind grenade smoke also began to disperse. With both sides able to see each other again the scene was set for even greater slaughter this turn.

HOWLING GRIFFONS TURN 3

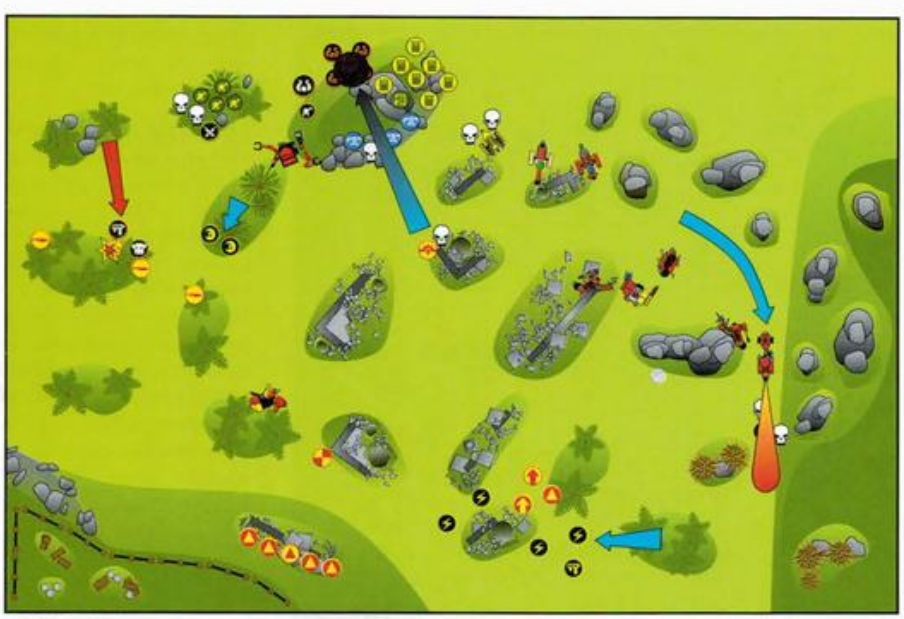
Fred seized the opportunity to charge the badly mauled Kommandos. Chanting his battle liturgies, the Chaplain leapt into close combat with two of the unfortunate Orks. To his left the Dreadnought advanced to attack the last two vehicles and walked straight into the sights of the overwatching Traktor Kannon. The bizarre Ork weapon fixed the giant Imperial machine with its traktor beam but failed to penetrate the massively thick armoured sides. Smoke poured from the Traktor Kannon's controls

The Marines cheer as their Librarian kills the Orks' Warphead with a Vortex.

as it took up the strain , dragging the Dreadnought towards the Ork positions and almost, but not quite, into the sights of the other support weapons. With no clear line of sight to the Dreadnought, the Splatta Kannon fired at the central Tactical squad once more. Again its shell failed to bounce more than once and the Space Marines escaped without a scratch. Adrian began to think that the dead Mekaniak had got just about what he deserved! Having survived the Orks' fire, the Tactical squad in the centre began to move away from the cover of the ruins and close in on the exposed Stormboyz.

From the hill on the left of the Imperial battleline, both the Chief Librarian and the Space Marine Commander advanced to skirt around the ruins that the Devastators were using as cover. In front of them the Scouts were faced with a mass of Ork guns and readied themselves for combat.

Leading the squad, the Scout Sergeant ordered his men to use frag grenades to blast the Orks from their concealment in the jungle. Unfortunately, the young Scouts' lack of experience told and their grenades all failed to harm the Orks, knocking the Minderz off their feet but little else. Finally the Sergeant showed them how it was done, by lobbing a frag grenade into the Gretchin mob and killing two of them. The survivors faltered, rolling another double six as a Break test! However, they were inspired by the sight of the Battle Standard Makari close by, and passed their test the second time.



ORKS TURN 4

Amid the black smoke and scattered wreckage that marked the graveyard of the Ork Warbikes stood the Dreadnought. With calm efficiency it opened fire with its assault cannon at the Wartrak, which exploded spectacularly in a mushrooming ball of flame. The mighty war machine then fired its storm bolter at

the Scorcher but could barely make out its form amid the debris and its shots went wide. Fred was disgusted and Adrian delighted – he had plans for that Scorcher!

In the centre, the Devastators joined in the carnage. Their heavy plasma gun destroyed the krew of the Smasha Gun in a ball of incandescent energy and a wave of panic sent the rest of the krews running from the field! By careful positioning, Fred had placed both of the Devastators' heavy bolters and their lascannon so that they were able to chose the targets he wanted. An accurate lascannon shot cut down the Deathskull carrying the heavy bolter and the rest of the heavy weapons pounded away at Makari. With his amazing luck, the little fellow escaped death every time, leaving Fred aghast!

HOWLING GRIFFONS TURN 4

In the bitter hand-to-hand combat against the Kommandos, the Chaplain killed one of the Boyz and as the other broke and ran he cut him down too. With only the Kaptin left, the broken mob was effectively destroyed and the model was removed.

Even with the extra energies of hand-to-hand combat this turn the Warphead managed to pass his Waaagh! test but the warp flux was still too small for him to use any of his powers. The Chief Librarian had just enough to *Teleport* himself forwards to attack the second mob of Gretchin who were cowering in some ruins. As they fled, the Librarian butchered one of the cringing creatures and the last two Gretchin were also removed as they were beyond hope of rallying.

TURN 3 VICTORY POINTS

ORKS: 10 POINTS

SPACE MARINES: 11 POINTS

ORK TURN 4

This was it! Adrian had only one turn left and it was going to be close. With a mighty roar Ghazghkull called on the power of the Waaagh! and all across the battlefield the Orks felt a renewed sense of strength. There would be no more failures, the Orks would sweep the Space Marines before them!

Feeling the strength of their Warboss in the very air, the last two Goffs charged the Scouts whilst the rest of the Orks and Gretchin cheered wildly. The Goffs would show those Scouts a thing or two! The Warphead's Minderz clustered closer about him as they watched for any sign of a Space Marine attack. They had kept him alive so far and didn't want to lose the Warphead on the last turn of the game.

On the left flank the Scorcher accelerated to combat speed and bore down on the Chaplain, whilst the Stormboyz jump-packed towards the remains of the Tactical and Devastator squads positioned in the centre of the battlefield. With the force of the Waaagh! in them the Orks were really in control and only one of the Stormboyz span wildly off the board and into oblivion.

With a roaring whoosh of flame the Scorcher released its cargo of burning death completely engulfing the Chaplain who stood no chance of survival. The gunner on the Scorchers laughed maniacally as he watched the last Howling Griffon on this flank die. Unfortunately the Ork attack in the centre came to nothing, for without their numbers to aid them the Orks were unable to inflict any damage at all. The Stormboyz were particularly disappointing as they failed to inflict the killing blow on two Space Marine squads worth a total of seven victory points. On the far flank, the Goffs fared only a little better killing a single Scout in their hand-to-hand combat. The Scouts were unworried by the assault and passed their Break test with ease.

Finally, to add injury to insult, the Chief Librarian used the *Ultimate Force* to unleash a *Vortex* at the Warphead. The *Aegis Suit* the Warphead was wearing fused and with nothing he could do to halt the awesome power, he just watched in horror as his carefully defended Warphead, Minderz and Deathskulls were consumed by the infinite power of the warp.

The end was nigh.

SPACE MARINE TURN 4

At either end of the battlefield the Space Marines were on the move once more. To the left, the remains of the Scouts charged the foolishly brave Goffs. At the other end of the battleground the Dreadnought pursued the Scorcher, eager to revenge the death of the howling Griffons' Chaplain.

As the flanks positioned themselves for the final attack, the centre of the Howling Griffons line let loose with a storm of

bolter fire. The surviving Tactical squad sprayed the last few Stormboyz with deadly accurate bolter shells, killing two and the mob finally broke and fled the battlefield. The Devastators on the hill above them opened up on Makari once again and to their disgust he shrugged off every shot! Only their heavy plasma gunner was positioned to fire at another target and his aim was perfect. The Painboy found himself engulfed in plasma and as his charred body crumpled to the floor, the doughty Scouts managed to finally defeat the Goffs, and wiping them out completely!

The Orks' right flank was in tatters but the slaughter wasn't over yet as the Space Marine's Chief Librarian cut down the surviving Minderz with a hail of bolter fire. Meanwhile, the Dreadnought had caught up with the Scorcher…

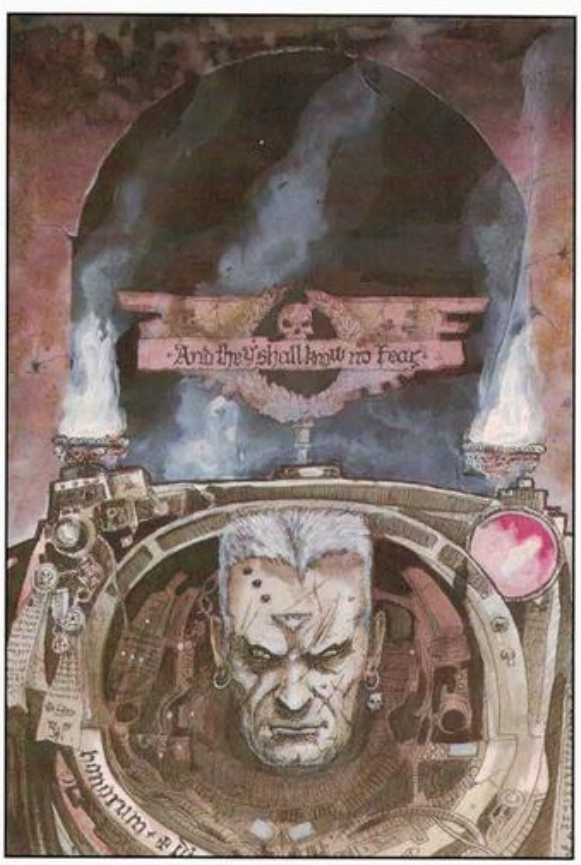
The heavy weapons of the ancient Imperial war machine fired one final time and the Scorcher's fuel detonated in a blinding explosion, utterly destroying the Ork vehicle in a plume of fire.

As the shattered remains of the Ork vehicles crackled and burned the Space Marines watched as the Orks retreated, the battle was over and victory was theirs.

TURN 4 VICTORY POINTS

ORKS: 13 POINT

SPACE MARINES: 24 POINTS



THE AFTERMATH

All praise to the Emperor! Mission accomplished and the Howling Griffons are fully blooded.

Although I won the battle it was a very closely fought game. For most of the time it was touch and go whether I would ever get anywhere near killing the Warphead it was just luck that I drew the *Ultimate Force* card which allowed me to do it so easily. By the end of turn three I was getting desperate and I thought that I would have to try and win on kills alone. In many ways the battle was all going horribly wrong – my right flank had virtually collapsed and the Land Speeder lay in a smouldering heap of wreckage, but in the end the legendary determination of the Space Marines saw them through and I was rewarded for my faith in the Emperor with the perfect weapon to complete my mission.

Overall my plan worked fairly well. I managed to keep most of my expensive units alive including the two major heroes. On my left, the Scouts and Land Speeder managed to heavily damage Adrian's forces, breaking the Gretchin, wiping out the Goffs and destroying his Dreadnought before it had fired a single shot.

On the right, my own Dreadnought obliterated the Ork vehicle squadron with a little help from the Tactical squad's missile launcher. By the end of the battle it stood alone in the middle of a sea of burning debris, dead and dying enemies scattered around him like the final scene from a film.

The Devastators performed admirably. They had duelled with his Deathskulls and won, killing the Orks with their heavy weapons and cutting down the Mekaniak carrying the Shokk Attack gun before he could cause much damage. In addition, they had also stalled the Gretchin mob in the centre which had tried in vain to cover the Orks' support weapons at the back of their lines. Finally, they had targeted the crews of the support weapons themselves and forced the few survivors to flee for their cowardly lives.

I did lose both the Lexicanian and Chaplain Hero which was all the more frustrating as I had the *Look out Sir, AAARGH!* in my hand all along. Each time one of my characters was slain he was much too far away from any other troopers for them to intervene and save him. Ah well… maybe next time.

In the end Adrian was a bit unlucky. I got the right card and having closed the range for *Vortex* there was nothing he could do to stop me using the power. Even so, he still failed to roll the save for his *Aegis Suit* and so lost the Warphead and his fate was sealed.

All in all, it was a great game that was close run until the end when fortune and a lot of sustained fire carried the day.

ABJECT HUMILIATION

Oh no! Defeated by *Witch Hunt* again! I truly dread fighting against an opponent with this mission and once again, no matter how much I tried to protect him, my Warphead was hunted down and slain.

What went wrong? Turn one saw what was probably my biggest mistake. In hindsight I can see that I should have attacked much harder on my left flank and played as if fighting an oblique line tactic in Warhammer. Fred had deployed his Dreadnought, two Tactical combat squads and a Devastator combat squad in quite a restricted area and I should have attacked more decisively.

If I had attacked the Tactical squad and Chaplain on the end of the line with the both the Kommandos and the Stormboyz at full strength I could have thrown the Space Marine battleline into confusion. Then, whilst they were still reeling, my vehicle squadron could have knocked them completely off balance and left Fred in disarray. If I had done this the Fred would have had to rethink his plans in the face of such a concerted attack and things might have been very different. In the event, I sat back and waited which just left the initiative with the enemy.

At the time I was a bit worried about the damage the Space Marines' Dreadnought could do and so didn't commit my forces as I should. Next time I'll try to remember to either avoid the really dangerous enemy units completely, or tackle them head on. Charging in against the Dreadnought sounds like a suicidal idea but even a devastating vehicle like that can only cause so much damage in one turn. The Boyz would have had to risk the wrath of the Dreadnought but it would have found itself with too many targets to shoot at once and so it would have been swamped.

In stark contrast to my left flank, the advance on my right was mistimed and I should have held back. My failure to recognise the threat to my Dreadnought from the Land Speeder cost me dear both in fire power and victory points. Once the Land Speeder's multi-melta had reduced my most powerful single model on the battlefield (next to Ghazghkull) to a heap of molten slag the whole advance stalled. If I had I only caught on to Fred's plan earlier I would have been much more defensive and overwatched against such an attack.

In the centre of the battlefield Fred managed to out-flank my artillery with his Dreadnought and rendered them useless for most of the game as they had nothing to shoot at. The only plus point (and believe me it was the *only* plus point) was that the Dreadnought wasn't in a position to threaten my centre either and spent the entire game trying to wipe out my vehicle squadron!

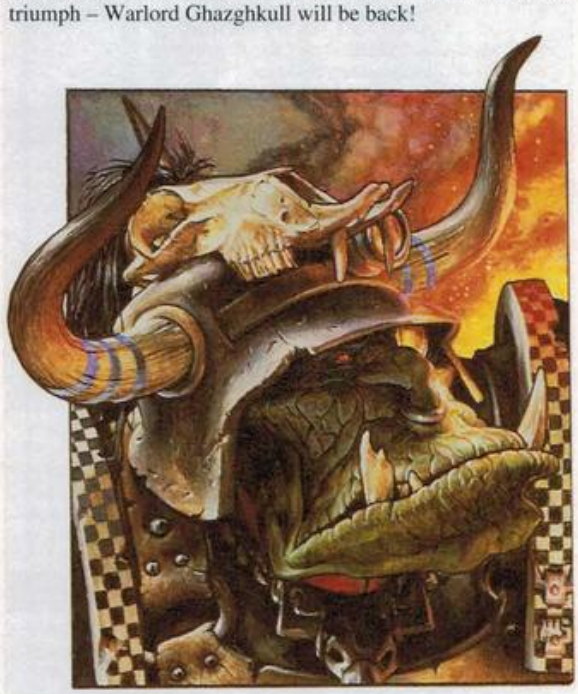
Once I could see the way the battle was heading I was able to counter Fred's attack and keep the victory points close until turn four. Then, what was supposed to be my final hammer blow with the Stormboyz against the remainders of Tactical squad and the single surviving Devastator, ended instead with the Boyz in a rout. With this last embarrassing defeat yet another opportunity to gain victory points slipped away with a whimper. When the small pockets of surviving Orks and Gretchin on the right flank failed again to cut down the Scouts I knew the game was up.

After three turns of stalemate all it had taken was for one side to tip the scales in their favour and the other side collapsed. Unfortunately for the Orks, Space Marines are still able to strike hard with almost no troops, and once it had started there was nothing I could do to stop my downward plunge.

On the other side of the battlefield I have to say that Fred proved himself to be an adept Space Marine Commander and I hope to play him again someday. He managed to contain most of my attacks even when his squads had been badly shot up. After some careless initial deployment, he became much more careful with his troops and hung back, letting the awesome power of his Chief Librarian accomplish his mission.

It was an unusual battle in which neither of us made an all-out attack, both being content to probe the others' defences with a string of assaults by single mobs or vehicles. This meant that the casualties were concentrated on these aggressive units, many of which were completely wiped out! My squadron of four vehicles, Stormboyz, Blood Axe Kommandos and Goff mob were all destroyed utterly as were Fred's Land Speeder and one of his Tactical squads. It was my downfall that I couldn't finish off the other Tactical squad and the badly mauled Devastators. In the end, only the Space Marines' Dreadnought and Chief Librarian managed to attack vigorously and still escape unharmed.

The lesson that I learned from this battle is not to be half-hearted about attacking. Pick your targets and attack them without mercy and with everything you can throw at them. Weak and hesitant attacks only result in your own forces being obliterated. Next time will be different, next time I will triumph – Warlord Ghazghkull will be back!



BLOOD AND FIRE

By Jake Thornton and Adrian Wood

The Ultramarines lead their Imperial Guard allies against the mighty Waaagh of Ghazghkull Thraka in this hard-fought battle for control of an ancient Imperial outpost.

The Ultramarines entrance was as dramatic as it was sudden. The air was split by a sonic boom and a Thunderhawk gunship shot overhead its bolters blazing, rockets rippling from under its swept-back wings. Every possible hiding place was cleansed by fire and exploding death before the gunship landed – no sneak assassins would endanger the deployment of the finest warriors in the history of Mankind.

Even before it touched the charred ground the doors swung open and the first of the Ultramarines Assault troops leapt down. The rest of his squad followed, quickly securing a perimeter with silent efficiency. As the last of the Ultramarines dispersed, a warning klaxon sounded briefly, then with a deafening roar the Thunderhawk lifted once more.

The deployment had taken seven seconds.

All was quiet. Throughout the jungle, birds and other creatures had cowered silently as the huge gunship had roared down on them. Now, as its din faded into the distance, their chatter and howls started once more. Bright plumage flitted from tree to tree and insects buzzed angrily through the heat-haze. The Ultramarines ignored it all. They were after larger game.

With surprising stealth, the heavily armoured troopers slipped through the undergrowth, bolt guns at the ready, senses alert.

Abruptly the dense foliage thinned, and they emerged into an open valley dominated by a massive plasticrete and steel construction in the centre – Landing Pad 41.

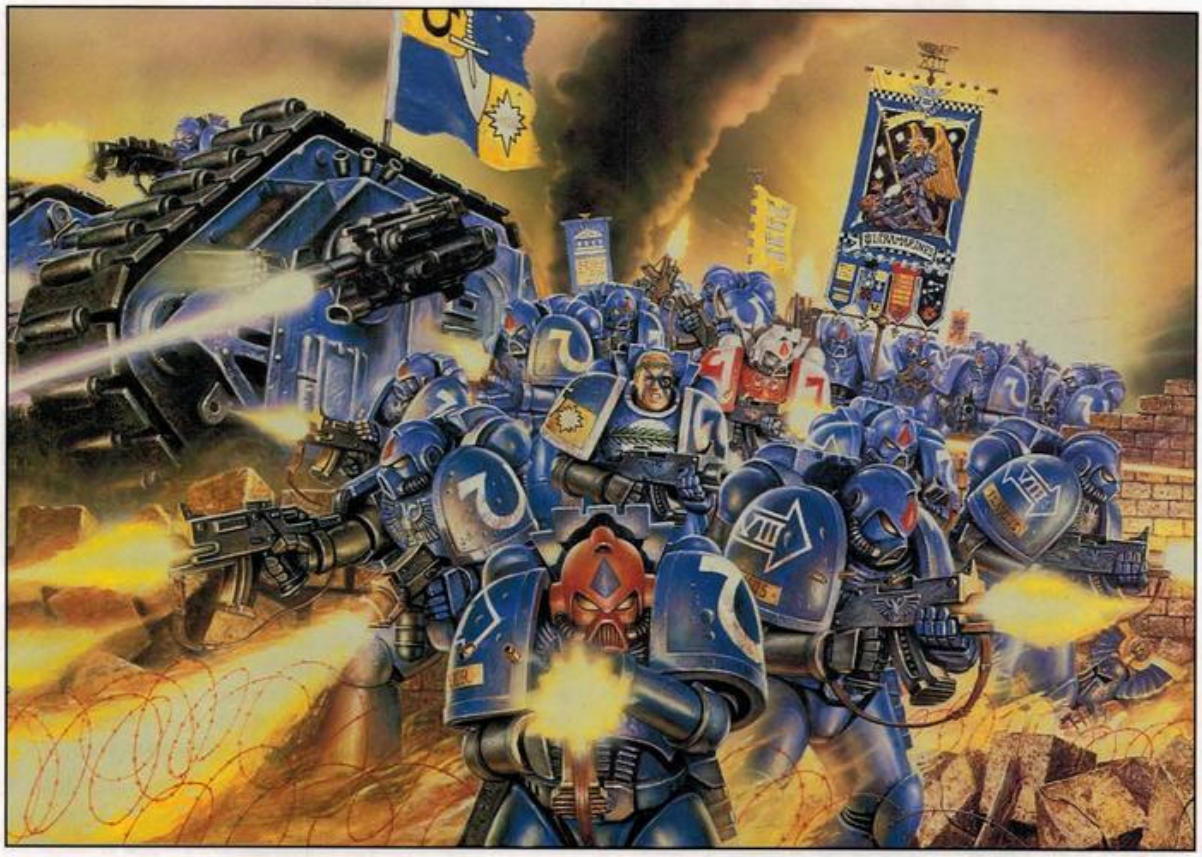
Rumour had it that the Orks were massing to attack this Imperial outpost, and the Assault squads had been rushed in to hold the position whilst the rest of the Imperial force caught up.

The Ultramarine troopers took up position, watchful for the slightest indication of an Ork presence, but there was none. Then, suddenly there came the distant sound of bolter-fire. Explosions, mayhem and destruction spread through the jungle towards them. Smoke began to rise above the hanging canopy of leaves. Judging by the subtlety of their approach this had to be the Orks.

The Space Marines made their final equipment checks automatically, waiting for the enemy to arrive. Waiting for their battle-brothers. Waiting for battle.

The Ultramarines smelled their Imperial Guard allies before they saw them. The Rough Riders were particularly obnoxious, but they had seen them fight and knew the Attilans to be brave warriors, however little they washed.

As the Ork horde finally broke into the open and they could be seen in all their fierce alien glory the Ultramarines Commander spoke for the first time. "Fear not" he said, "The Emperor is our shield."



INTRODUCTION

This battle was fought as part of the development for the Codex Ultramarines and Imperial Guard. Not only did we have the Studio's large Ork and Ultramarines armies at our disposal, but also all the latest releases such as the Ork Nobz in mega-armour and the Imperial Guards' Cadian Shock Troops, Rough Riders of Attila and Catachan Jungle Fighters. To accompany these troops, Jervis delved back into the vaults and brought the rules for Commissar Yarrick up to date so that he could once more battle against his arch-enemy Ghazghkull Thraka.

Jake took command of an Ultramarines army with Imperial Guard allies, a familiar mixture of troops much like his own army. His opponent was Adrian Wood, a famed Warboss in his own right. He was playing with slightly less than his customary dozen Warbikes, but thought that he could still put up a good fight with what was to hand.

The battlefield was laid out on one of our eight foot by four foot gaming tables with Own Branham's latest piece of scenery – the huge Landing Pad – forming the centrepiece of the battlefield. This splendid addition to our scenery is shown in several of the photos and will be sure to feature in many future games.

As the game was played, Jake kept notes and Adrian took photos and made sketch maps. This meant that they could get on with the battle and not worry about the quality of the pictures until afterwards. When the dust had settled, a combination of all these elements was used to recreate the battle with proper lighting and cameras to take the photographs you see here.

The same sketch maps and snapshots were also used as the basis for the computer generated maps which you see in this battle report. As usual, these use a slightly condensed battlefield as the extreme ends of the tabletop are seldom used much in a game. We've found that if we concentrate on the part of the tabletop over which the battle was fought then we can use larger, clearer maps.

The battle was fought with normal rules apart from those for the Imperial Guard which Rick has expanded and improved since it was fought.

CHOOSING THE ULTRAMARINES

By Jake Thornton

Since the last time I led the Ultramarines to war (in White Dwarf 175) I've been honing my battle skills and praying to the Emperor for guidance. I have read the Imperium Tactica, meditated in the Chapter's Reclusiam and consulted the Imperial Tarot. This time when the Emperor ordered the Ultramarines to war there would be no mistakes.

The core of my army would be an Ultramarines Assault squad and Terminator squad. Their unflinching bravery would enable me to plan my battle without having to worry that my men might run away! The most numerous troops in my army were the Imperial Guard. These warriors aren't as good as the Space Marines on a one-to-one basis, but you get three times as many of them and I wanted to try out this mixture of Imperial troops in battle. This would also avoid the normal Space Marine problem of being outnumbered three-to-one by the Orks! I chose three different squads of Imperial Guard, and put the legendary Hero of the Imperium – Commissar Yarrick at their head. His inspiring leadership would keep them in the thick of the battle regardless of casualties.

I felt that I also had to include at least one decent psyker and with none of the Ultramarines' Librarians available I resorted to the Adeptus Astra Telepathica. A fourth level Psyker Lord would give me access to the Adeptus powers and would also give me an even chance to dispel the Warphead's attacks. In fact, I wanted to be even more sure of halting the Warphead wherever I could and so I equipped my Psyker Lord with a *Psychic Hood* which enabled him to reroll any failed attempts to nullify Adrian's powers.

Having already taken an assault cannon for the Terminators, I was pleased to take another with the new Dreadnought. At under two hundred points this devastating war machine is a complete bargain. Leaving aside their actual offensive potential, Space Marine Dreadnoughts are so feared by their enemies that they will often go to great lengths to destroy them, taking large amounts of the incoming fire away from the rest of the army which can then advance unmolested.

A PLAN OF ATTACK

In Warhammer 40,000, the *Take and Hold* mission usually concentrates the battle around the objective that one side is trying to capture. This focuses the blood-letting (of which there is usually rather a lot) as squad after squad is sent in to accomplish the mission. In this battle, both sides had *Take and Hold*. This meant that the main fighting area would spread across the centre of the battlefield between the two objectives, as both sides struggled to complete their mission and frustrate the enemy's attempts to achieve theirs. It also meant that my forces would have to be given very specific tasks in the attack.

My army would be divided into two basic groups each of which included assault and support elements. One group would attempt to stop the Orks from capturing the Landing Pad whilst the second seized my own objective and held it at all costs. As each assault group advanced, heavy weapons would rain fire and death onto the Orks, destroying them where they stood and stalling any attempts to counter-attack.

In the middle of the Landing Pad lay the Orks' objective. Five victory points for the Orks is too many to let them have without a fight, so I decided to deny them this if I possibly could. Ultramarines Assault squads equipped with jump packs would lead the my attack, supported by the awesome fire of the Dreadnought, and the powers of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica Psyker Lord. Also with them would be a Chaplain Major Hero whose presence would support the Ultramarines in a similar way to Yarrick's encouragement of the Imperial Guard. How could the Orks hope to beat such a formidable force?

My main assault team was lead by Terminator squad Calidus. These veteran troopers would be followed by the Cadian Shock Troops who were mere Humans, but still loyal servants of the Emperor. Also, with Commissar Yarrick leading the way they would never break, and as long as he lived I could rely on them totally. From their vantage point high above the battlefield, the Catachan Jungle fighter Command Section and squad would cover the advance on my objective. They too could see Commissar Yarrick and so even if the Orks were able to bring down fire on them to silence their attacks, their bravery too was assured.

Finally on the far left, the Rough Riders of Attila would make a wide approach under cover of the terrain. When they got close enough in turn three or four, they would charge, smashing any Orks who threatened my possession of the objective. It was my duty to the Emperor to *Take and Hold* this bunker and I wasn't going to let any mere Orks get in the way!

ULTRAMARINES ARMY (2000 points)

ULTRAMARINES

COMMANDER

Space Marine Commander equipped with a bolt pistol, frag grenades, power sword and power armour.

CHAPLAIN

Chaplain Mighty Hero equipped with Crozius Arcanum, Rosarius, bolt pistol, frag grenades, and power armour.

DREADNOUGHT

Space Marine Dreadnought equipped with an assault cannon, power fist, and auto-launchers.

TERMINATOR SQUAD

4 Space Marines equipped with Terminator armour, storm bolters and power fists. One trooper carries an assault cannon. The squad is led into battle by a **Sergeant** with a power sword.

ASSAULT SQUAD

9 Space Marines equipped with power armour, bolt guns, krak grenades, jump packs, and a mixture of assault weapons. The squad is led into battle by a **Sergeant**.

IMPERIAL GUARD

ADEPTUS ASTRA TELEPATHICA

Psyker Lord equipped with a laspistol, flak armour and *Psychic Hood*.

COMMAND SECTION

4 Imperial Guard troopers equipped with lasguns, flak armour and a missile launcher. They are led by a **Lieutenant**.

ROUGH RIDERS OF ATTILA

4 Imperial Guard troopers equipped with hunting lances, chainswords, and riding horses. They are led by a **Hetman**.

COMMISSAR YARRICK

Commissar Yarrick equipped with a storm bolter and power claw.

CATACHAN JUNGLE FIGHTERS

9 Imperial Guard troopers equipped with lasguns, flak armour and a missile launcher. They are led by a **Sergeant**.

CADIAN SHOCK TROOPS

9 Imperial Guard troopers equipped with lasguns, flak armour and a heavy bolter. They are led by a **Sergeant**.

ORK INTRODUCTION

By Adrian Wood

When I realised Jake was going to be using the stalwart Commissar Yarrick I knew I would have to take Ghazghkull Thraka as Warlord for my army. This powerful Ork leader is the embodiment of Orky power and I hoped to see a duel between the two old adversaries. Needless to say, Ghazghkull never takes to the field without his trusted battle standard bearer, Makari. This jolly chap should provide an excellent example to the two squads of Gretchin that I like to use as a skirmish screen for the rest of the army. Hopefully he should stop them running away too!

For me, a Shokk Attack Gun team is an absolute essential in any self-respecting Ork army. This time I decided to equip the Mekaniak with a *Power Field*, giving him a 2+ save against enemy fire. Although quite expensive and cumbersome it should keep him alive long enough to really give the Ultramarines a headache.

As I wanted to take a Dreadnought, I would need a Painboy as well as the Mekaniak I had already chosen for the Shokk Attack team. Naturally I equipped the Painboy with a *Vaxxine Squig* to keep any nasty viruses at bay. After all, I didn't want to catch anything unpleasant from the humies!

I looked through the miniature cabinets at the Boyz mobz and decided which ones to take. Both the Bad Moons and the Deathskulls were large mobs with multiple heavy weapons and I took these in preference to any support weapons. They have proved to be useful squads in the past and they would hopefully prove to be so again. Blood Axe Kommandos were my next choice – vital for scouting ahead and harassing the enemy. They are also armed with power axes which can even do serious damage to vehicles!

The one squad I was particularly looking forward to using was a Bad Moon Nobz mob. Resplendent in their shiny new mega-armour and armed with power fists, they looked a bit like Ork Terminators. It would be interesting to see if they would stand up to Space Marine Terminators…

Finally, it had been some time since Snakebite Boarboyz have graced my army and I was eager to use them. These fast moving troops have all the toughness of Orks in 'eavy armour and are much faster too! I would try to use a screen of Gretchin to protect them, but of course they might prove a little too slow to keep up with the slavering horde of Ork War Boars.

BATTLE PLAN

The mission that I had drawn was to *Take and Hold* the centre of the Landing Pad. I thought carefully about my plan of attack and decided that I would set up the infiltrating Blood Axe Kommandos on the Landing Pad itself. I guessed that Jake would set up an Assault squad to jump pack onto the Landing Pad and eradicate the Boyz, however, if I put the Kommandos on Overwatch on the first turn, the Ultramarines Assault squads would charge into a hail of bolt pistol fire. I would also place the Deathskulls on the ridge near the back line with a screen of Gretchin. Both squads would Overwatch the Landing Pad as well. A hail of fire like this can be deadly even to tough troops like Space Marines and their power armour can only save so many times. With the way cleared by this barrage of fire, I could then run the Snakebites up the slope and over the top to capture my objective.

Jake had also picked *Take and Hold* as his mission – this was going to be interesting! There were now two points on the battlefield to occupy, the Landing Pad and the bunker beside it. I decided to put the Nobz in mega-armour opposite the Ultramarines' objective. They would advance behind a wall of Gretchin and be supported by the other Bad Moon squad.

SET UP

As we started to deploy, I was forced to rethink my battle plan to compensate for Jake's strategy cards. His *Brilliant Strategy* card meant that I had to set up first instead of the Imperial Guard and the overall strategy rating for the Imperial army was now much higher than the Orks. It was more likely I would be moving second, which was not necessarily a bad thing in a *Take and Hold* mission but would stop the Orks from delivering the hammer blow that they are famous for.

After the Imperial deployment I couldn't set up the Kommando's on the top of the Landing Pad because both Assault squads were on top of it instead! Nevertheless I decided to stick to my battle plan as closely as I could and set up the Blood Axes on the cliff out of sight. Everything else I set up according to plan with the Bad Moon mob, Warphead and Blood Axe Kommandos hidden. With the Space Marine Assault squads sitting on top of my objective the mission suddenly looked a lot harder.

WAAAGH! GHAZGHKULL (2000 points)

DA BOYZ

WARBOSS
Warboss **Ghazghkull Thraka** equipped with a *Kustom Blasta* and *Sniffer Squig*. With him is his Gretchin Standard Bearer **Makari**.

WARPHEAD
Weirdboy Warphead with a *Weirdboy Staff* and four **Minderz**.

PAINBOY
Painboy with power claw and a *Vaxxine Squig*.

DREADNOUGHT
with a lascannon, heavy bolter and 2 power claws.

NOBZ MOB
4 Nobz equipped with mega-armour and power fists.

BLOOD AXE KOMMANDOS
7 Blood Axe Kommandos armed with power axes and led by a **Kommando Kaptin**.

BAD MOONS MOB
8 Bad Moons Boyz led by a **Nob** in 'eavy armour.

GRETCHIN MOB
10 Gretchin armed with autoguns, or autopistols and knives.

GRETCHIN MOB
10 Gretchin armed with autoguns, or autopistols and knives.

DA BUGGIES

WARTRAK
Wartrak with a lascannon.

SCORCHER
Scorcher with a heavy flamer.

WARBIKES
2 Warbikes with twin autocannons.

BOARBOYZ
6 Snakebite Boarboyz led by a **Nob**.

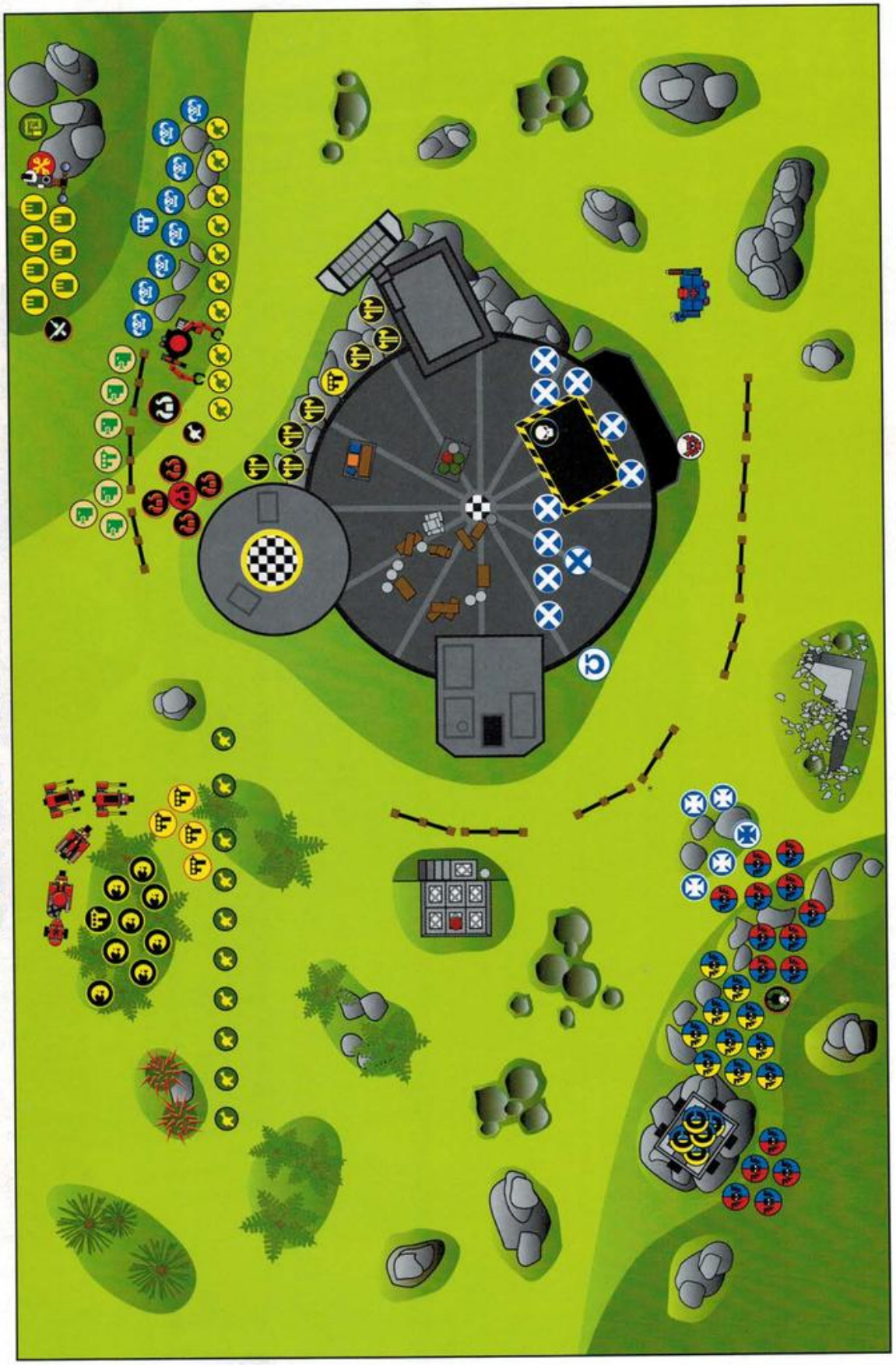
DA BIG GUNZ

DEATHSKULLS MOB
8 Deathskull Boyz equipped with 2 heavy bolters, 2 heavy stubbers and a heavy plasma gun. They are led by a **Nob**.

MEKANIAK
Mekaniak equipped with Shokk Attack Gun and *Power Field*.

RUNTHERD
Runtherd. with **7 Snotling** bases.

DEPLOYMENT MAP



From the very start of the battle the Ultramarines were locked in a bloody hand-to-hand struggle for the Landing Pad.

ULTRAMARINES TURN 1

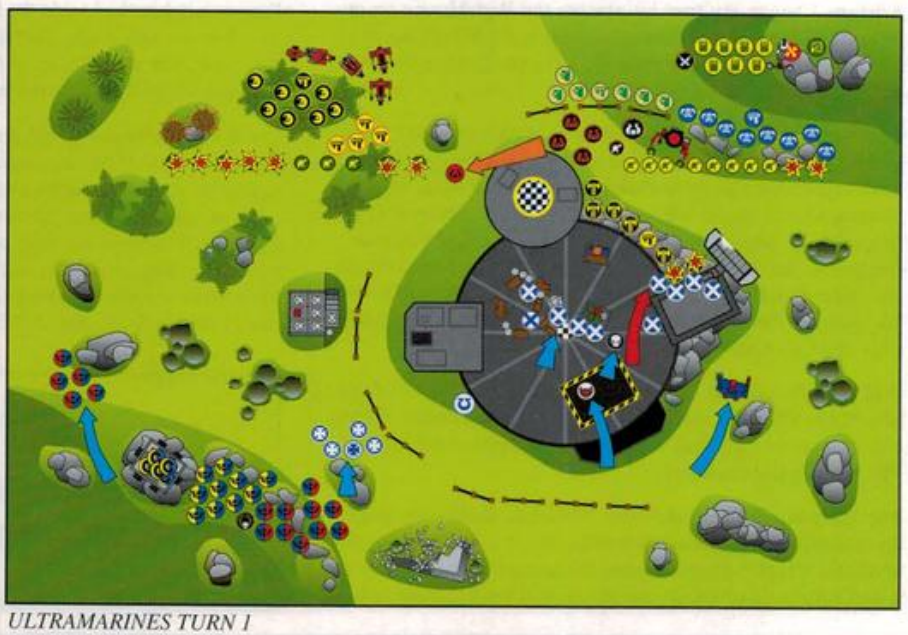
Jake: With my *Brilliant Strategy* I easily won the roll to see who would move first. I had already used my other Strategy card (*Forced March*) to deploy both Assault squads, my Chaplain, Psyker and Commander far forward and before Adrian could do anything the Ultramarines had swarmed forwards and captured his objective.

My first Assault squad charged into the Blood Axe Kommandos who were lurking at the edge of the Landing Pad. Behind them the second squad, Chaplain and Psyker followed up in support, and to their right the Dreadnought advanced to cover their flank.

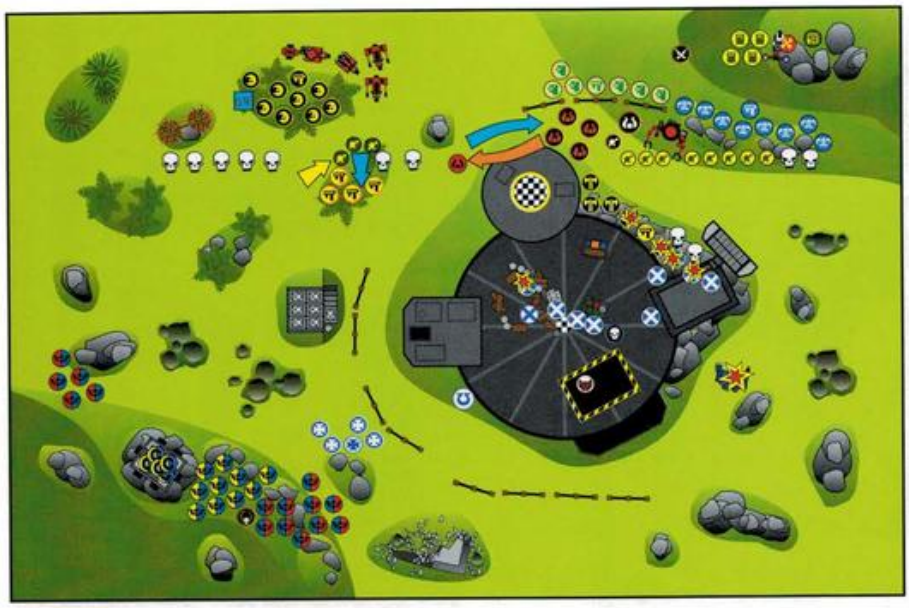
On the other flank, the Ultramarine Terminators advanced under the protection of the Imperial Guard on the hill behind them. At the same time, the Rough Riders swept out to my left, keeping in cover all the time. My plan was for them to fall on the flank of the Ork line in turn three or four.

The Imperial Guard's fire was mostly out of range with the exception of their heavy weapons, but even these failed to kill their targets. The Terminators demonstrated the difference between Imperial Guard and Space Marines as they mowed down seven Gretchin and watched the rest break and run.

At the other end of the battlefield, the only firing was from the Dreadnought who needed to clear the second Gretchin screen away. With a string of unlucky dice rolls, I made up for the



ULTRAMARINES TURN 1



ORK TURN 1

Terminators' success by only killing two of the little greenskins. Not even enough to force them to take a break test!

The first Assault squad was already locked in combat with the Blood Axe Kommandos. Rolling another flurry of 1's they just struggled through, killing two of the Orks who passed their break test and stood firm as the Assault squad followed up, pushing the Kommandos back down the slope.

I began the psychic phase by using *Assail* to drag the Warphead away from his Minderz and into the open. Adrian couldn't nullify this, but I managed to stop his reply – *Squish*. Finally, I sent the *Carmine Assassin* against Ghazghkull but he easily shrugged off the attack.

ORK TURN 1

Adrian: I began my turn by placing the Bad Moons on my right on Hidden Overwatch and running the Warphead back towards the largest concentration of Orks on the table where he was grabbed and sat on by his Minderz.

Concentrated firepower wins battles. With this in mind I began to systematically fire everyone at the Ultramarines Assault troops who weren't engaged in hand-to-hand combat with my Kommandos. I began with the Gretchin mob firing at close range. To my surprise and Jake's dismay one of the Emperor's finest slumped and fell off the Landing Pad. My Dreadnought also blazed away at the Ultramarines Assault squad with both his heavy bolter and lascannon but managed to completely miss all of his targets.

Warlord Ghazghkull decided it was time to show the Boyz how it was done. He took careful aim with his *Kustom Blaster* and with an ear-splitting explosion was knocked off his feet. The weapon had exploded!

The Minderz, Painboy and three Snakebite Boarboyz opened up next, but all their shots went wide. This was terrible. Instead of all the cheapest troops blasting the nearest Space Marines in a veritable hail of shots, the firing had only succeeded in killing a single Marine – and that was done by a Gretchin! I had hoped to blast all eligible targets out of the way of the Deathskulls, who would then have the honour of slaughtering the second squad of Ultramarines clustered around my objective. Unfortunately, the Space Marines were just too tough and the Deathskulls would have to fire at the first squad too.

I decided not to mess around any more – I would fire into hand-to-hand combat if that's what I had to do to accomplish my mission! The Deathskulls set their faces like flint and roared a defiant battle cry, as much from frustration as anger. With a deafening roar they opened fire and the hillside erupted as hundreds of explosive rounds chewed up the ground. Sure that they had destroyed the Space Marines the Deathskulls paused, only to find when the smoke cleared that the only casualty had been a Blood Axe Kommando!

The last of the Orks on the hill to fire was the Shokk Attack team which singled out the Space Marine Dreadnought. With the shot bang on target, Snotlings materialised inside the body of the unfortunate pilot of the ancient machine, killing him instantly. The machine stood ominously upright and silent and Jake didn't look too pleased either. The Mekaniak cheered and the rest of the army started to chant "'Ere we go, 'ere we go…"

From my right flank, the Nobz mob and vehicle squadron fired at the second Assault squad. Only a single shot struck home but this blasted one of the Ultramarines into oblivion. Meanwhile, the Space Marine struggling with the Blood Axe Kommando knocked aside the Ork's power axe and buried his sword in the Ork's gut. The Kommando's body rolled down the cliff-side and the their resolve faltered but Warlord Ghazghkull steadied the mob with a growl.

The Warphead began the psychic phase by using *Squish* on the last Assault Marine in combat with the Kommandos. The trooper's armour crumpled and split, killing him, much to the relief of the Blood Axe he was fighting. But before he could gloat, the Warphead was once again buffeted across the ground by *Assail*, straight into the sights of the dreaded Terminators. More powers rocketed across the battlefield but with the sides evenly matched, all were nullified harmlessly.

TURN 1 VICTORY POINTS

ORKS: 2 POINTS

ULTRAMARINES: 2 POINTS

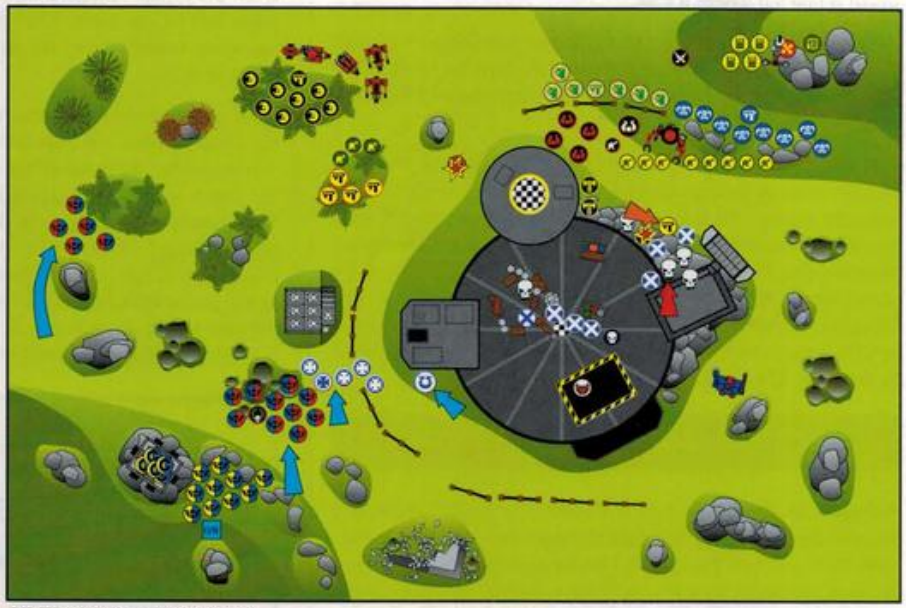
As they reach the edge of the Landing Pad the Ultramarines find a solid wall of Orks advancing towards them.

ULTRAMARINES TURN 2

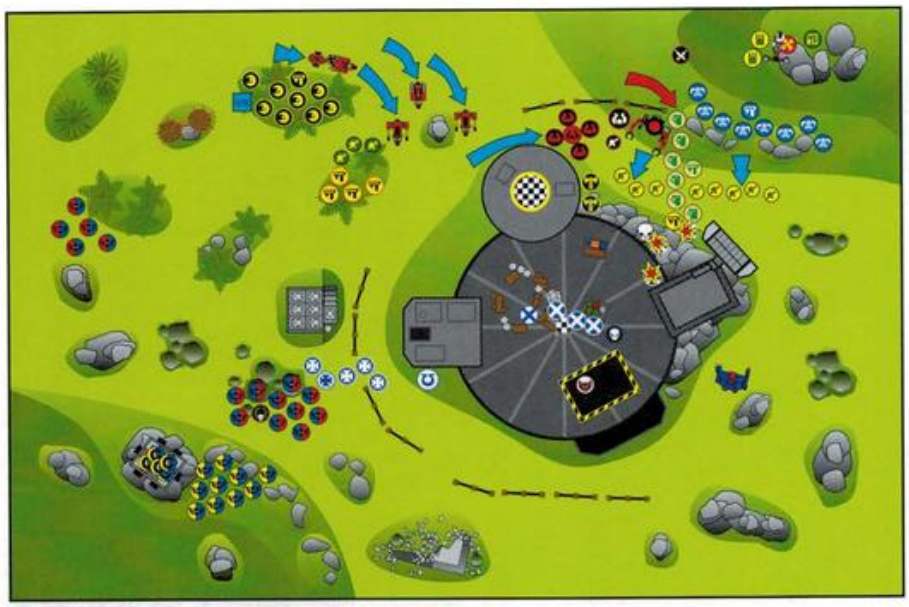
Jake: Aaaargh! I knew that blasted Shokk Attack Gun would be a problem but I hadn't expected it to be so deadly so early in the game. For once the Orks actually hit what they aimed at – something you can usually count on *not* happening. My right flank was now completely open and if Adrian charged his Boarboyz round there would be nothing I could do to stop him. I just had to keep quiet and hope that he didn't see his chance.

To give him something else to think about, my left flank advanced rapidly, closing in on my objective. To support this advance, Commissar Yarrick and the Catachan Jungle Fighters went on Overwatch in case the Orks did move forward. On the far left, the Rough Riders continued to move around the flank, totally ignored by the Ork horde.

Back on the Landing Pad the unengaged troopers in the first Assault squad charged into hand-to-hand combat with the surviving Blood Axes, but only one of them managed to get into contact. The second squad remained in cover behind the crates that were Adrian's objective, wary of the massed fire from the hill.



ULTRAMARINES TURN 2



ORK TURN 2

The Terminators fired first, targeting the Warphead who had been dragged into the open by the psychic power *Assail*. With two of the squad just out of range and another clearing a jammed weapon I only managed to wound him twice. He was still alive but with only one wound left he would be much easier to kill now.

From the tower on my far left, the Imperial Guard Command section fired with their missile launcher, hitting one of the Ork Nobz in mega-armour with a krak missile. With the high save modifier of the krak missile, the Ork had to rely on the fixed 4+ save from the medi-squig to keep him alive. This was the second time this had happened and I was beginning to get the idea that these Orks were going to be rather difficult to get rid of. Beside the Ork Nobz, the cowering Gretchin were targeted by my Commander in an effort to kill just one and remove the whole squad. Needless to say his shot failed to wound and the squad remained where it was.

On the Landing Pad itself the fighting continued with the Kommandos losing another of their mob. Still they refused to break as they were directly under the stern gaze of Warlord Ghazghkull Thraka himself.

The warp flux was fairly weak again and I stuck to the easy and low energy powers that I had used before. With *Assail* I dragged another Blood Axe into hand-to-hand combat with one of the Assault troopers. Adrian tried to attack the Space Marines with *Power Vomit,* but the Ultramarine Assault squad stood firm. Again, I sent the *Carmine Assassin* to kill Ghazghkull. Adrian's attempts to *Nullify* the power failed and as just I began to have visions of actually killing Ghazghkull he was saved by the thickness of his *Adamantium Skull*.

ORK TURN 2

Adrian: As the attack by the Blood Axe Kommandos had failed I decided to try to break through the Assault Marines with the Snakebite Boarboyz. I declared a charge and also set the Bad Moons to my right on Hidden Overwatch once again.

Jake's Psyker Lord was on the lift and out of sight. He was also in no position to advance easily on my army because in order to get out of the lift he would have to use his whole movement allowance to clamber up the side.

The Warphead had been badly shot up by the Terminators but was still alive so he ran back towards the rest of the Ork army and was grabbed by his Minderz once again. Unfortunately, the mob of charging Boarboyz had to negotiate the rest of the Ork army, and after weaving through the mass of greenskins only one made contact with the Ultramarines. On my right, the vehicle squad swept around the corner and risked the Terminator's weapons, whilst the Nobz mob in mega-armour began to move towards the Ultramarines' objective. The Catachan Jungle Fighters on Overwatch fired their missile launcher at the Nobz but the shot whistled harmlessly over their heads and blew apart a tree.

I decided to try massed firepower again to destroy the lead Assault squad. Firstly, the remaining Blood Axes blasted away at the Space Marines. The Emperor's finest stood untouched. Then the Painboy opened fire, killing one of them with a lucky shot. The Runtherd, followed by the Gretchin blazed away at the troopers but failed to even scratch their armour. Then the Dreadnought picked off the Sergeant with his lascannon. The Deathskulls ignored the last Ultramarine in hand-to-hand combat and took aim at the second squad of Assault Marines. To my horror, each shot either failed to hit or failed to wound. Even the Shokk Attack Gun misfired and two Snotling stands were lost to the warp. Finally my gamble with the vehicle squadron failed to pay off as the Terminators shrugged off every shot.

Both the hand-to-hand and psychic phase were over quickly. In the close combat, the sole survivor of the first Assault squad was struck by the Boarboy but survived. Caught off balance by the blow, he couldn't defend himself and was slain by the Kommando's power axe. In the psychic phase I immediately played *Energy Drain*. I was a little tired of Jake's Psyker Lord using *Assail* against my Warphead and *Carmine Assassin* against Ghazghkull, and thought a turn of inactivity for the psykers would do them good! Now I could only hope that the Terminator's assault cannon would miss the Warbikes!

TURN 2 VICTORY POINTS

ORKS: 5 POINTS

ULTRAMARINES: 2 POINTS

Both sides close in on the Space Marines' objective in the bunker.

ULTRAMARINES TURN 3

Jake: With no survivors of the first Assault squad, the second held back, waiting on Overwatch in case the Orks tried a frontal assault to capture their objective. I had succeeded in stopping the Orks and now I just had to make sure that I could hold onto what I had.

On the left of my line, the Catachan Jungle Fighters went on Overwatch too. In front of them, both the Terminators and their Imperial Guard allies continued to advance on my objective in the bunker. On the far left, the Rough Riders prepared to charge next turn. In the centre, my Commander also moved closer to the bunker, staying in cover beside the Landing Pad.

The only firing was on my left, with the Ork Nobz shrugging off the shots from both Commissar Yarrick and the Cadian squad that followed him. Not only this, but one of the Nobz was saved yet again by his medi-squig as another krak missile from the Command Section struck home. Would nothing stop these mega-armoured Orks?

With all of the Imperial Guard firing at the Ork Nobz I had expected at least one of them to go down. Sadly, a combination of long range and my poor luck saved them all. With so few troops at my disposal, I couldn't afford to also direct the fire of

ULTRAMARINES TURN 3

In a storm of flame and explosions, the Terminators capture their objective and wipe out the Ork Nobz!

the Terminators at the Nobz. Instead, the elite of the Ultramarines turned their attention to the Ork vehicles. The Terminators' weapons spat death, killing the driver of the Wartrak and damaging the machine itself. One of the Warbikes took several hits, flipped over and exploded in a great fireball, the flaming wreckage narrowly missing the Nobz.

With only three cards from the warp this turn I could only use one power and this was nullified.

ORK TURN 3

Adrian: Things were getting a little sticky and I found myself grasping at straws. The Snakebites had to charge the Ultramarines Assault troops in order to have any chance of reaching the top of the Landing Pad and taking my objective. Despite their desperate efforts, the cliff face proved too steep. I thought they would have no trouble scaling the rocks but, with their movement reduced by the cliff, even these highly manoeuvrable, fast moving cavalry weren't going to make it. Even Jake was surprised that they weren't already over the top.

Time was running out. On my right, the Rough Riders were advancing and the Terminators, having already reduced the Ork vehicle squad to half strength, were nearing their objective. The time had come to make a decisive attack against the Imperial forces. I sent the Nobz mob charging towards the Terminators. They didn't reach them but they closed

ORK TURN 3

the distance between them and the Ultramarines' objective. They would charge again next turn, if their mega-armour didn't fail them. In the centre, the Wartrak sped off out of control, collided with the Warbike and both exploded. Finally, the overwatching Catachan Jungle Fighters fired at the Nobz, but the energy pulses from their lasguns and yet another missile bounced harmlessly off the Ork's thick armour.

ULTRAMARINES TURN 4

On my left flank, the Dreadnought moved forward to get a better view of the Ultramarines on the Landing Pad. Behind it the Warphead and his Minderz backed off towards cover. As the Rough Riders swept through the jungle towards them, the Bad Moons moved out of cover in order to shoot them up before they got too close. With typical Ork cunning, the Bad Moons missed with every shot, lulling Jake into a false sense of security.

Finally, I used the Strategy card that I had been saving for just the right moment. The *Barrage* landed on target and engulfed the survivors of the Assault squad on the Landing Pad but only one trooper died. I fired the Shokk Attack Gun at the same point but the warp hole scattered and the last two Snotling stands materialised way off target. The Deathskulls mob cut loose with everything they had once again and amidst the hail of fire, jamming guns and explosions, the Boyz killed another Ultramarine as well as the Kommando Kaptin!

With no hand-to-hand combat that turn we got straight into the psychic phase. After last turn's three, this turn I rolled double six! With plenty of Force to use I began by using *Waaagh!* at *Ultimate force*. It also knocked the Psyker Lord sprawling, wounding him into the bargain. I was just readying my next attack when Jake played *Energy Drain*, cancelling out the *Waaagh!* and ending the phase and the turn.

Things were getting quite desperate for the Orks. I had to very carefully consider when Ghazghkull was to call on the power of the Waaagh! next turn. Everything depended on whether Jake charged the Terminators at the Nobz mob or stood and shot them up. If he charged, I would have Ghazghkull release the power of the Waaagh! immediately. If he didn't, I would probably wait until the hand-to-hand combat between the Bad Moons and the Rough Riders which I knew would happen next turn. What was Jake going to do?

TURN 3 VICTORY POINTS

ORKS: 6 POINTS

ULTRAMARINES: 3 POINTS

ULTRAMARINES TURN 4

Jake: After thinking long and hard I decided to charge the Bad Moon mob with my Attilan Rough Riders. I was rather worried that the Scorcher behind them would burn the Imperial Guard to a crisp, but in the end I thought that the overwatching missile launchers at the back would have a chance to take it out before it could harm me and I wanted to see what these Attilans could do!

I resisted the temptation to charge the Ork Nobz with the Terminators as I decided that I could probably do more damage from a distance. Also, if the Terminators moved onto my objective in the bunker, then Adrian would have the difficult task of winkling them out in only one turn. This move was backed up by the advancing Cadian Shock Troops and Commissar Yarrick who almost surrounded the bunker.

The Imperial Guard fired first as the Terminators moved forwards. Those that could see the Ork Nobz fired at them, hoping somehow to get through their formidable armour. Not surprisingly, all of them failed. The last to fire was their flamer who launched a stream of burning liquid at the Orks. One of the Nobz disappeared in a ball of flame which proved too much even for his medi-squig, and the Imperial Guard chalked up the first kill against these tough Orks. Another survived the flames but continued to burn. The rest of the squad shot at the Bad Moon Boyz at the back of the Ork lines, killing two of those who weren't in combat with the Rough Riders.

Having taken up position on their objective, the Terminators now opened fire at the Ork Nobz. Explosive bolter rounds crashed off their armour but it was the assault cannon that really did the damage. All three of the surviving Nobz died under the concentrated hail of gunfire, their medi-squigs giving up the unequal struggle as shot after shot wounded the aristocratic Orks.

The last shots came from my Commander who picked off one of the cowering Gretchin. As a result Adrian removed the rest of the squad as there were no longer enough of them to rally.

ORK TURN 4

The hand-to-hand combat phase was next, but before I could roll a single dice Ghazghkull invoked the power of the Waaagh! This added +1 to all the Orks in hand-to-hand combat and made Ghazghkull himself immune to any damage for the rest of the battle. On the left, the Rough Riders of Attila spurred their mounts forwards, crashing into the Ork ranks with their deadly hunting lances. They cut down two of the Bad Moons including their Nob, but in return the Orks killed one of the horsemen.

Finally, I rolled for the warp flux and Adrian took another Waaagh test. To my amusement and Adrian's dismay the Warphead failed his test and his head exploded! With a free hand in the psychic phase I began by trying *Assail* but was nullified. I then sent the *Carmine Assassin* against one of the surviving Boarboyz but narrowly failed to wound him. Lastly, but most importantly, I placed a *Hellstorm* so that it blocked the route onto the top of the Landing Pad. This sealed off the objective from Adrian's troops so that he couldn't possibly capture it even if he could scramble up the cliff fast enough.

ORK TURN 4

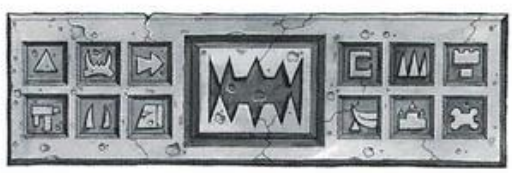
Adrian: The Terminators and the Rough Riders must die! Not only had the Terminators smashed the Nobz mob but they were also holding the Ultramarines' objective. At the rear of my lines, the Bad Moon squad facing the Rough Riders were doomed, at least to being reduced to half strength. For this reason the unengaged Boyz would charge into close combat and try to take some of the Imperial Guard with them! The Waaagh! was still in effect and, because it had already saved their skins somewhat last turn, they had a fighting chance against the cavalry this turn.

I began to retreat the Blood Axe Kommandos and the Snakebites away from the Landing Pad. The steepness of the cliff and the *Hellfire* at the top had defeated them – they would never reach my objective in time. The last thing I wanted was for the Psyker Lord to turn his unwelcome attentions against them, especially since the Warphead was now dead.

As I turned the Dreadnought to face the Terminators and advanced the Scorcher against the Rough Riders, Jake opened fire with his troops on Overwatch. The Catachan Jungle Fighters fired a krak missile at the Scorcher, blowing off its tracks but it still kept going – just! The Jungle fighters Command Section also fired a krak missile at my Dreadnought, badly damaging its lascannon arm. Yet another victory point to Jake and the forces of the Ultramarines.

The badly damaged Scorcher unleashed a stream of flaming liquid over the unengaged Rough Rider, incinerating both rider and mount. Unfortunately, the Imperial troops were in line of sight of Commissar Yarrick so they automatically passed their break test! The Dreadnought and the Deathskulls opened fire at the Terminators and all missed! There was now no way the Orks could recover the battle. The Bad Moons were almost wiped out in the hand-to-hand combat that followed, a single Ork stubbornly refusing to turn tail and flee. The last Psychic phase was upon us.

With only one psyker on the board I only rolled a single dice but still came up with six cards! I was unable to do anything except watch as the Psyker Lord used *Hellfire* to incinerate a Blood Axe Kommando. Even as the last Kommando passed his break test the *Carmine Assassin* crushed him, wiping out the mob and giving away another VP.



With that final casualty Warlord Ghazghkull began to retreat his forces. The battle was over.

TURN 4 VICTORY POINTS

ORKS: 6 POINTS

ULTRAMARINES: 17 POINTS

VICTORY!

That was a battle to remember! All through the fighting the honours were neck and neck right up until the very end when my ability to stop Adrian's Orks from getting close to either objective really paid off. Most of my plan went fairly smoothly and so there isn't much to say about it. Apart from the Dreadnought going down to the Shokk Attack Gun my few casualties were an expected part of the assault.

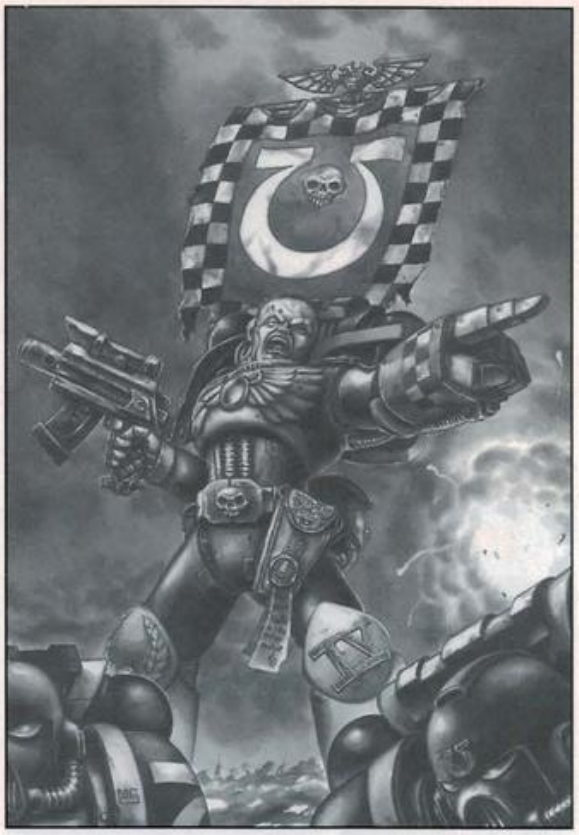
Adrian thinks that my *Forced March* and *Brilliant Strategy* cards won the game for me and it's true they were a big help. They allowed me not only to set up on top of the Landing Pad within a few inches of the Orks' objective, but also to move first and consolidate my hold over it. However, it is worth considering that even without these cards the Assault squads would have been able to get there with their jump packs. The fight with the Blood Axe Kommandos would probably have been much fiercer, but in the end the result might well have been the same.

What I feared, and what I think would have been Adrian's best plan, was an all out attack. People often criticise the Orks for their lack of tactical finesse, but there are times when a good old fashioned frontal assault is the best strategy. With their advantage of numbers and the early death of my Dreadnought, Adrian could have sent the Boarboyz sweeping around the completely exposed flank to attack my Psyker Lord and keep him from supporting the Assault squads. Whilst he did this, he could have sent the rest of the Orks and Gretchin "over the top" and charging the pitifully few Ultramarines that actually held his objective. True, there are only a limited number of ways onto the Landing Pad and it is slow going uphill, but Adrian never really tried an all out charge until it was too late.

In fact, most of the Orks simply sat and tried to kill the Assault Marines by shooting them from a distance. This took out quite a few of my troopers but was never going to be able to remove the ones that the Deathskulls and others simply couldn't see. The Psyker Lord who was able to completely block any Ork advance on the last turn by using *Hellfire* was never even threatened, and after the death of the Dreadnought he really held my right flank together.

Throughout the battle I was worried about, and expecting, a mass attack by the Orks that never came. This paranoia kept me on my toes, thinking that I had a much less firm grip on the objectives than I actually did. Other than this strategy, I couldn't see any easy way of removing me from the Landing Pad once I had captured it and as Adrian wasn't contemplating a frontal assault I was fairly safe.

What can I say about the Dreadnought except that it was really unlucky? I had expected great things and with its assault cannon and storm bolters it would certainly have ripped into the massed body of Orks that stood on the hill. The effects of the Terminators' assault cannon – killing three of the Nobz on



Mega armour when krak missiles and storm bolter hits had just bounced off shows just how much carnage Adrian avoided with that well placed Shokk Attack Gun shot.

ORK CONCLUSION

Another plan down the tubes! Warlord Ghazghkull has certainly been tasting defeat lately.

Throughout the battle I stuck to my plan and I believe that minimised casualties as much as possible. I was defeated by bad dice rolls, very difficult terrain and, most importantly, by the exceptional Strategy Cards that Jake received. Overall I can't complain – Jake had his own bad dice rolls to contend with too. In many respects I should have been more aggressive with the Nobz mob and advanced them towards the Ultramarines' objective in turn one instead of shooting at the distant Assault Marines. It is always easy to see "what might have been" with hindsight, but at the time the chance to kill some of the Assault Marines who were sitting on my objective was much more tempting a prospect than the distant and heavily armoured Terminators.

The Ork mega-armour worked really well, saving no less than three krak missile hits with its built-in medi-squig! The Blood Axe Kommandos also did very well in difficult conditions. They were only just destroyed on the last turn after having been shot at and fought hand-to-hand for the entire game. They are another mob that finds a regular place in my army.

Either way it was an interesting battle with Jake and I both having the same mission. Owen's terrain certainly proved a challenge and made for a great game of Warhammer 40,000.

HERETIC!

By Andy Chambers, Jervis Johnson, and Jake Thornton

After the big battle report in White Dwarf 181 everyone said we ought to do another, so here it is! This time we've delved into the war-torn history of the 41st millennium to bring you a huge tank battle, fought across the blood-soaked plains of the rebel planet Korsk II.

HUGE BATTLES

Jervis: A few issues ago we published *A Gathering Of Might*, a battle report describing a huge Warhammer battle we fought at the Studio. The battle used every single one of the Empire, Orc, Goblin, Wood Elf and Chaos Dwarf models in the Studio's collection, and was so large that it required a team of players to command the forces on each side!

Judging by the letters we've received you really liked the article, and so we decided to do a similar battle report for Warhammer 40,000. First of all we thought we'd simply fight out a huge battle between our Space Marines and Orks, but after some careful consideration we decided it would be much more fun to come up with a scenario that would allow us to use all of the Studio's extensive collection of vehicle models (backed up by some vehicles belonging to Studio staff) in a single enormous tank battle!

However, a quick visit to the Studio model cabinets revealed one slight problem. While we had loads of Imperial Guard and Space Marine vehicles, the only way we could come close to getting a vehicle force that would stand a chance against them was if we combined all the other races together. As the idea of Eldar fighting on the same side as Orks and Chaos was clearly

Dawn spilled through the bunker's vision slits to form parallel bars of light and dark across the rockrete floor. The tall, cloaked figure paced back and forth through the patches of illumination, humming quietly to himself. Guardsmen stood ramrod-straight nearby, obediently waiting for their orders. One of their number lay at their feet in a crumpled heap, the dark stain leaking from his head forming a pool across the floor. It didn't pay to bring bad news to the attention of Lord Varlak. The pacing figure stopped suddenly and swung round on its heel with theatrical slowness. A bald, high-browed forehead shone above cruel eyes and lips which twisted into a sickly smile "It's still not here, is it?", he said.

"No sir!" The chorused voices of the Guardsmen were deafening in the confined bunker. Varlak winced before raising his bolt pistol and blowing a fist-sized hole in the nearest Guardsman. The body collapsed wetly and Lord Varlak, self-declared World-Autarch of Korsk, resumed his pacing. The Guardsmen didn't move a muscle. They knew that their Lord was under a lot of pressure and that his acts of apparently random violence were always directed at cowards, traitors, shirkers and other scum – after all, he had told them so himself.

Nonetheless, it was a source of considerable relief when they heard the thudding blades of an approaching airlifter. Varlak stepped over to one of the vision slits. "Ah-ha", he said, almost to himself, "Those Space Marines won't catch me now, breakthrough or no breakthrough".

The long, dark body of the 'lifter was visible now, twin rotors hauling its ponderous bulk towards the landing pad. It slowed and turned, preparing to land just as beams of ruby light slammed down from above it like the wrath of God. The 'lifter gouted flames and thick, black smoke before it rolled over, breaking into three pieces as it tumbled from the sky. Shattered pieces of 'lifter rattled off the bunker as a miniature mushroom cloud rose over the crash site.

Varlak grimaced and put his head in his hands. After a while he turned to address the assembled Guardsmen, cold wytchfires burning in his eyes. "You see what happens when you have filthy scumbag traitors in your ranks?" He paused to viciously kick one of the prone figures with an elegant boot. "Now we'll have to wait for the reinforcements" The Guardsmen nodded glassily, caught in the liquid harmonics of his voice like insects in honey. "Get out there and man the guns. Make sure no Space Marines get in here" The Guardsmen doubled out of the chamber and moments later Varlak heard heavy engines starting up and the shouts of men preparing for battle.

He gazed through the slits to the north where a great plume of dust marked the approach of the Emperor's accursed Space Marines. Glancing back to the animated map on the far wall he could see his three columns of reinforcements also closing in. The four groups on the map raced toward the complex in a deadly contest. As he watched the first Space Marine missiles landed nearby. The bunker shook and dust trickled from the ceiling. It was going to be close...

ridiculous, we decided instead to have a battle between all of our Imperial vehicles on one side and all of our Space Marine vehicles on the other. How did such a situation come about? Well, it was like this…

BACKGROUND

On the backwater planet of Korsk II, a rebellion had taken place. The evil Lord Varlak, a rogue psyker of prodigious power, had taken control of the Imperial Guard forces stationed on the planet and seceded from the Empire. He had been able to do this thanks to a unique psychic ability which convinced anyone that he was able to speak to that every word he said was true, no matter how outrageous the words might be! Varlak had used this ability to good effect, convincing the commanders of the Imperial troops on the planet that he was their saviour, and that the Emperor and the Space Marines were their most deadly enemies!

Varlak's conspiracy might have gone unnoticed for some considerable time if it had not been for Inquisitor Marcus. Quite by chance, Marcus was on Korsk II when Varlak proclaimed himself ruler of the planet. Marcus knew the importance of acting quickly and decisively in such circumstances, and lost no time in sending an urgent message to the Adeptus Terra. Contingents of troops from four Space Marine Chapters (Blood Angels, Dark Angels, Space Wolves and Ultramarines) converged on Korsk II within days.

A surprise landing by the Space Marines caught the defenders almost completely unprepared, allowing them to establish a base camp with the minimum of opposition. Rather than wait for additional troops, the Space Marines decided to attack immediately. A mechanised battlegroup including units from all four Space Marine chapters was quickly organised, and sent to capture Lord Varlak in his bunker command centre.

"Curses! Just when you've finally managed to bring the whole world under your evil influence some pathetic little Inquisitor goes whining off to the Adeptus Terra about rogue psykers and daemonic influence. I mean, do I look possessed? Well, do I?? DO I???".

Lord Varlak's personal log, 5.03.995.M41. SPOOL 1.

Varlak barely had time to organise a scratch force of cooks, mechanics and other rear-echelon troops to defend his command centre before the Space Marines were spotted on the horizon. He desperately sent out messages urging the Imperial Guard reinforcements that were already on the way to make all speed to his aid. Only time would tell if they would arrive in time to save him from the Space Marine attack…

FORCES AND TERRAIN

As will quickly become clear when you look at the troops involved, I didn't use an army list to pick the two sides. Instead, I simply took every single Imperial vehicle I could lay my hands on and divided them up between the two sides. I then added foot troops to fill up the transport space in the Space Marines' Rhinos and Razorbacks, and the Imperial Guard's Chimeras. Next, I topped up the Imperial Guard forces with a small contingent of troops to protect Lord Varlak and defend

the command centre. Finally I decided to add some Rough Riders to the Imperial Guard relief forces, for no other reason than I like the models!

Each side was commanded by a team of players. Lord Varlak was represented by none other than Andy Chambers, while the Imperial Guard relief forces were commanded by the three new 'assistant games developers' we've recently employed to work at the Studio: James Funnell, Phil Lowles and Gavin Tyler. This seemed highly appropriate, as Andy is in charge of the games developers who work here, and it would give his new apprentices a chance to prove themselves in battle. The Space Marines were commanded by a crack team of Warhammer 40,000 veterans drawn from the White Dwarf bunker, consisting of Ian Pickstock, Jake Thornton, Gavin Thorpe and Adrian Wood.

THE TERRAIN

Having chosen the forces and picked the players, the next step was to sort out the terrain. With so many tanks all taking part in the same battle it was fairly obvious that we were going to need as large a playing area as possible. At first we considered playing the game on the floor, but the thought of any of the Studio's exquisitely painted models getting crushed under a misplaced foot was too much to bear and the idea was dropped. Instead we decided to play on two of our standard eight by four foot tables, butted together to form a playing area eight foot square!

Lord Varlak's command centre was set up in the centre of the table, and a small number of extra pieces of terrain were added

"They've broken through my guardsmen and they're heading out here to my luxury bunker complex and private airlifter terminal. My personal airlifter, summoned for just such an eventuality, has been delayed indefinitely by cannon hits from that floating monastery the Marines call their ship. In spite of this initial setback my loyal guardsmen are now speeding to my rescue and should be arriving presently. Once they arrive it's off to the Cavern Country in the south where those Space Marines will never find me." (background noises of cheers and applause).

Lord Varlak's personal log, 8.05.995.M41. SPOOL 3.

near the edges of the table to make the whole thing look as attractive as possible. The final set up is shown on the map. Note that we've used much less terrain than usual. This is because we wanted to have an open and free-wheeling encounter which allowed the vehicles we were using to manoeuvre and engage each other at long range, rather than the close range infantry firefights we normally have.

SET UP INSTRUCTIONS

Most of the troops taking part in the battle did not start set up on the table. The only exception was Lord Varlak and the command centre defence force which started out safely holed up in the bunker complex. As the Space Marines would have no idea where the defenders were deployed, I decided to let Andy note down their positions on a map, and the models were not placed on the table until after the Space Marines had completed their first move. In addition, Andy was allowed to set up any of the defending models in overwatch if he desired.

The Space Marines got the first turn, and were allowed to enter at any speed from their edge of the table. The Imperial Guard relief forces had to roll a D6 at the start of each Imperial Guard turn to see if they arrived: they had to roll 4+ to arrive on their first turn, 3+ on the second, 2+ thereafter. A second dice roll was made on the turn the relief force arrived to see exactly where it entered the table. Note that each relief force had to roll separately to see when and where they arrived. Relief forces were allowed to enter play at any speed. The deployment map shows the entry points for both the Space Marines and the Imperial Guard relief forces.

THE FOG OF WAR

Standing side-by-side with your fellow commanders while towering high above the wargames table, it's all too easy to chat about what you plan to do in your next turn without giving any thought to how difficult this would be in the chaos of a large battle. In reality, the separate commanders could only talk directly if they were close enough to be able to hear each other (a rare circumstance amongst the noise and confusion of combat). Most of the time they would have to rely on hastily transmitted messages sent over short-range comm-links.

To represent this during the game, players were not allowed to talk to each other about tactics or what they planned to do. Instead they were allowed to send 'radio messages' on a tape recorder. Each player was allowed to record one message per turn, in secret. At the end of the turn the tape was rewound and all messages were played back ONCE to all of the players at the same time. Note that the opposing players were allowed to listen in too! This proved to be great fun and added a lot of atmosphere to the game, as well as greatly increasing the chaos and confusion factor! To get an idea of how entertaining this was I've included some of the radio messages recorded during the game in the battle report that follows. All of the communications quoted are actual messages recorded during the battle – none of them have been made up by me!

SPECIAL RULES

The victory conditions for the game were very simple. Lord Varlak had to escape off the southern edge of the table (the one marked 3-4 on the deployment map), and the Space Marines had to stop him! There was no turn limit – the game would carry on until Varlak escaped, or was killed or captured.

I decided to use a number of special rules to reflect the unusual nature of the battle, and speed up play. For a start, I decided not to let the players equip their vehicles with blind grenades in their auto-launchers as it would slow the game down (in such a big battle, all those D6 rolls to determine what happened to each cloud of smoke would have been very tedious).

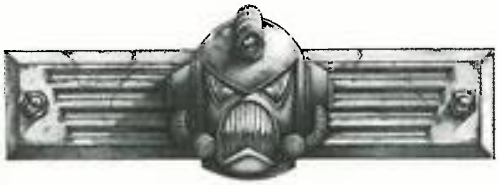
Because we didn't want the game to be dominated by characters armed with deadly wargear (this was a tank battle, after all!) we decided to limit the number of wargear cards in the game. In addition to the items actually on the models, each side would only have four wargear cards to allocate between their characters. What's more, the wargear cards were dealt out at random instead of being chosen, and I removed any cards from the deck that I thought might unbalance the scenario. Once the cards had been dealt out, the players were allowed to allocate them to characters as desired.

Psykers were dealt their psychic power cards normally, except that Varlak's deck had been culled of cards that would allow him to teleport off the table, and one of his powers was assumed to be his special ability to talk people into believing everything he said (not much use in a battle of course, but that's life!). At the very start of the game each player was dealt a strategy card, ie four per side, again from a deck from which any cards that might spoil the game had been removed. Players were not allowed to discuss the strategy cards they'd been dealt during the game, not even over the 'comm-link'.

Finally, we decided to use a couple of Ian Pickstock's "house rules" for the vehicles. Those of you who have been lucky enough to pick up Citadel Journal 7 will have seen Ian's articles describing his modifications to the Warhammer 40,000 vehicle rules. Now, while I might not agree with all of Ian's changes, there are a couple of rules he has come up with which I really like, and so I decided to use them for this battle.

Entry points for the Space Marine army and the Imperial Guard relief forces.

The first of these has to do with the way weapons with a blast marker effect vehicles. As any player who has had a vehicle reduced to slag by a multi-melta will know, weapons with blast markers are very efficient at destroying vehicles – in fact, with hindsight, they are probably too efficient. This is partially because they can choose which location they hit on a vehicle, which makes them very accurate, and partially because they can effect more than one location, all with the same armour penetration values. This makes them very deadly.



For those of you that don't have Journal 7, Ian suggests that you roll on the Hit Location table for the vehicle to see where the blast marker is placed on the model instead of choosing the location. He also suggests that you halve the armour penetration of any hits on locations that did not suffer a direct hit, instead of using the full value. For example, a Rhino is hit by a multi-melta. The attacker rolls on the hit location table and gets a 1. This a direct hit on the nearest track, which means that the multi-melta's blast marker must be placed over the track on the Rhino model. Any other locations on the Rhino that are under the blast marker will be hit on a 4+, and the armour penetration against any of the extra locations that are hit will be halved.

I also decided to use Ian's updated rules for models on foot charging vehicles. The present system does not take into account the speed a vehicle is travelling at when it is charged, so it is just as easy to attack a slow moving vehicle as it is to attack one that is hurtling along at top speed. Now, there is obviously an element of risk attached to attacking a fast moving vehicle if you are on foot, not the least of which is that you stand a very good chance of being run over unless you are extremely careful!

To represent this, Ian suggests that any model on foot that charges a vehicle moving at a speed of greater than 10" must roll equal to or under their initiative on a D6 in order to carry out the move safely (a roll of 6 always fails). If the model passes the test then it may attack the vehicle in the hand-to-hand combat phase. If it fails the test it may not attack, and takes an automatic hit with the strength, damage and save modifier of the vehicle's ram value.

FINAL NOTES

If you look at the maps and photographs on the following pages you'll notice one or two differences in the way they've been presented. Firstly, the maps are so big that we simply hadn't got the room to show each turn separately as we normally do. Instead, we've put both *player* turns on a single map. This means that Space Marine and Imperial Guard turns 1 are both on the *game* turn 1 map.

The second difference was again caused by the sheer number of tanks and other vehicles fighting in the battle. We decided that we couldn't simply take off the destroyed ones as they would provide useful cover for the survivors as well as getting in their way and blocking the gaps between the bunkers. Also, we thought that the game would look more exciting if the wreckage of damaged and destroyed vehicles littered the battlefield! With this in mind, we rooted about in the back of the games cupboards and found some grey and black cotton wool (actually old hamster bedding from the local pet shop!). Using these as smoke from the burning wrecks, we could now show damaged vehicles with grey smoke, and destroyed wrecks pouring thick black oily smoke from the holes in their armour! As you can see in some of the photos, this made the game look much more exciting, especially as the casualties began to build up.

EVIL LORD VARLAK'S EVIL PLAN

Andy Chambers, the evil Lord Varlak.

Andy: How to escape the vengeful Space Marines? It was a tough one, and not much helped by the fact that my loyal (if deluded) guardsmen would be arriving at a random table edge on a random turn. Coming up with any kind of a plan under the circumstances was virtually impossible, so I decided to give my sub-commanders flexible orders before the game started. This would hopefully mean that they would be able to support each other (and me!) regardless of when and where they arrived on the table. I also thought it might be useful to work out our comm-procedure before the battle so that we could communicate during the game without giving our plans away.

Gavin Tyler, Force Grendel.

There were four forces at my disposal. The first was my personal retinue consisting of my Ogryn bodyguards, a command section, some infantry squads formed from the gaggle of cooks, clerks, sanitizers and other such rabble in the complex, plus the jewel in the crown of my defence: two Leman Russ Demolisher siege tanks. Two of the reinforcing groups each comprised three Leman Russ battle tanks with a squad of Rough Riders in support. The final reinforcing group had one Leman Russ plus two Chimera troop transports, each carrying a squad of infantry.

James Funnell, Force Jabberwock.

I would be commanding my personal retinue, well... personally. The other troops were divided between the new assistant games developers Gavin, James and Phil. For communications purposes I gave each group a call-sign: Gavin would be commanding Force Grendel with its Chimeras, James and Phil respectively would take Force Jabberwock and Force Pegasus with their Leman Russ battle tanks. With a bit of luck it would take the Space Marine players a turn or two to work out which force was which.

With everyone allotted their forces it was time to come up with a suitably cunning plan for my escape! The important thing to remember was that even if my 'loyal' followers were winning the battle, we would still lose if the Space Marines managed to kill me. Naturally, I could try to sit it out behind the safety of the bunker's thick, rockcrete walls and hope my forces defeated the Space Marines. Unfortunately, the chances were that with my reinforcements arriving in dribs and drabs the Space Marines would be able to fight them off, get into the bunker complex and dig me out. I simply couldn't rely on my measly selection of underlings to fight off Space Wolves Blood Claws, Blood Angels Death Company and Deathwing Terminators! Escape seemed the only option, all I had to do was work out how to wangle it...

Phil Lowles, Force Pegasus.

A quick examination of the table established that making a run for it on foot wouldn't be practical. The Space Marines were bound to have a number of Land Speeders, bikes and other very quick vehicles that could catch me before I got half way to the edge of the table. Jervis ruled that I could commandeer any vehicle to make my escape in, kicking a crewman out if necessary. However, trying to escape in a Demolisher would be little quicker than moving on foot – it would also deny me one of my best defending units and turn me into a big, fat, slow-moving target for everything the Space Marines could bring to bear. After some thought, I decided that I would have to wait for my loyal reinforcements to arrive and hitch a lift with them.

As I mentioned earlier, the random arrival of the reinforcements meant that improvisation would be the order of the day. With this in mind, I gave Gavin, James and Phil orders they could implement wherever and whenever they turned up. I decided to order James and Phil to act as a blocking force. They would engage the Space Marines and inflict as much harm as possible. I felt that this would give them a better chance of doing what I wanted by distracting the Space Marines and drawing them into a firefight. It would also place a big mass of tanks between me and the Space Marines whilst I made my getaway. When Gavin arrived with Force Grendel, he was to speed to the bunker complex and pick me up, bringing both Chimeras so one could act as a decoy.

I emphasised to all three commanders that the Space Marines Land Speeders posed the biggest threat to this plan. If even one of those lethal skimmers broke through my defences, it would be able to swoop in and turn me into a greasy smear the moment I set foot outside my command bunker.

The next thing I did was note down the hidden deployment of my forces amidst the bunkers. The two large bunkers and the huge landing pad would effectively channel the enemy down three routes – centre (straight towards the command tower), left (past the large rock formation), or right (between the edge of the landing pad and the bunkers). I reckoned that by placing my two Demolishers to the left and right, lurking just behind the bunkers for cover, I could block or maul anything going in those directions. The command section would go in the tower for maximum field of fire, and the infantry would mostly occupy the forward two bunkers with one autocannon on the left side to watch out for Land Speeders scooting around the big rock formation.

Until the Space Marines managed to destroy the bulk of my forces, they would take a pounding if they attempted to storm the bunkers in a head-on attack. I deliberately left the centre route deceptively clear by keeping the nearby infantry hidden in the bunkers. If the Space Marines took the bait I could ambush the first things through and then rake any survivors with fire from the Demolishers. Once the first enemy tank was blown up in the gap it would prevent the vehicles behind it getting through and leave the Space Marines stalled in front of my defences. If the Space Marines tried to get around the flanks of the bunkers my reinforcements would hopefully trap them between the hammer and anvil.

I decided to start off Lord Varlak and his Ogryn bodyguard in the bottom level of the command tower. Its central location made it a less obvious choice than the two bunkers further back and also placed me close enough to the front line to use some psychic powers in my defence. This would be particularly useful in covering the centre, where that tempting-looking gap in the defences lay.

The final few touches in this so-called plan were to work out a system for scrambling our grid references during communication so the Space Marines couldn't use them, and to designate any calls involving colours (eg "Red plan 3, execute") as being totally bogus to confuse the Space Marines and make us sound organised!

"That's what I hate about the Emperor, you can never have any fun when there's an Emperor. Before you can even move onto systematically impaling your political opponents and old school friends, the Emperor's favourite lap-dogs, the Imperial Space Marines, turn up in a bloody huge ship and reduce your summer palace to a pile of ash. Then, to add insult to property damage, they come plummeting down without so much as a by-your-leave and start shooting everybody. All I did was rebel. After all, I'm sure the Emperor's just jealous because the people like me more than him – don't you boys?" (background noises of mindless acquiescence).

Lord Varlak's personal log, 7.05.995.M41. SPOOL 2.

PURGE THE HERETIC!

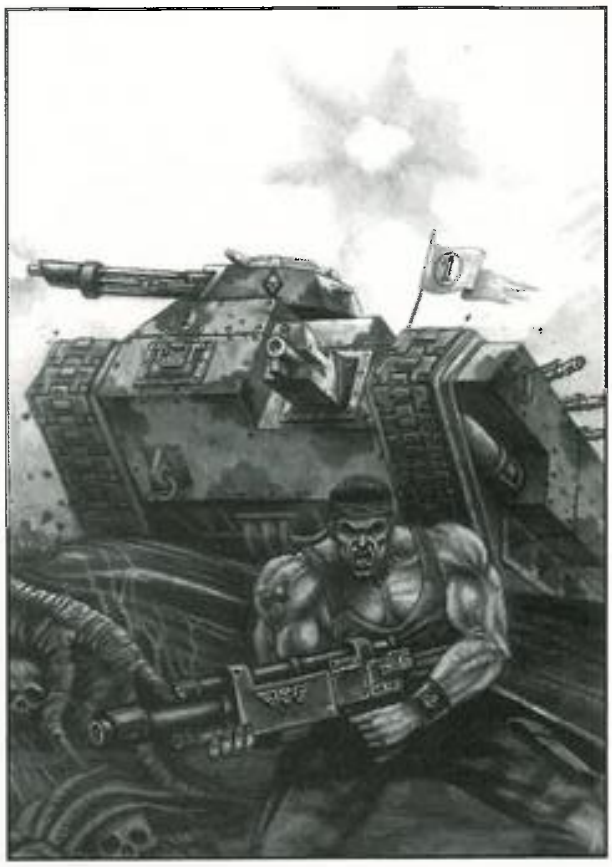
Jake: After the last giant battle we fought (*The Gathering of Might* in White Dwarf 181) everyone was eager to fight another huge game. This time we decided that it should be a Warhammer 40,000 battle, and to provide an extra twist we based it around the large collection of tanks and other vehicles we have at the Studio. To make the battle even bigger, we borrowed some Space Wolves vehicles from Kim Syberg (see the *Wolves of Fenris* in White Dwarf 185) and Ian Pickstock, and a squadron of Leman Russ battle tanks from Simon Tift.

Each side had four players with Jervis acting as a kind of referee. Ian Pickstock, Gavin Thorpe, Adrian Wood and myself made up the White Dwarf team, and while Ian and Gavin had only recently joined us they were both keen to prove their new loyalties. Our Space Marine army consisted of elements from four different Chapters, so we allocated one to each player. Adrian would take the Dark Angels, Gavin would command the Ultramarines, Ian would take the Space Wolves and I would have the small force of Blood Angels. However, in the end I was so busy working on White Dwarf that I simply didn't have time to play. Instead, I worked out a plan of attack for the rest of the army to follow, and left the actual battlefield commands to Ian, Gavin and Adrian. This sort of thing often happens with these big, multi-player games: someone has to visit their granny, or go to the dentist at the last minute and can't play. However, it isn't as much of a problem as it first seems because with so many players there's always someone around to look after your troops til you arrive. In our case, I put my Blood Angels under Gavin's capable command and went off to work out a plan.

THE PLAN

We had several problems to overcome if we were going to achieve our objective. Firstly, the Imperial Guard had more tanks than we did, they were all more heavily armoured and carried bigger guns! To balance this, we were much better shots than they were, but it still felt like a difficult job. Also, because the Imperial Guard reinforcements were going to turn up on a random edge, we wouldn't be able to treat any side as safe. Normally you can assume that the enemy won't be able to get behind your troops easily, but with the Imperial Guard relief columns arriving randomly, we just couldn't be sure.

Finally, Jervis decided that we couldn't use blind grenades as it would slow down the game too much. This meant that in order to stop the mad Lord Varlak from escaping, we would have to assault a bunker complex defended by Demolisher siege tanks and other heavy weapons, without any idea where the defenders were positioned, with no terrain to use as cover, no blind screen to conceal us, and enemy reinforcements coming on from all sides!



This was a very tall order, so my plan had to be cunning in the extreme. After much deliberation I decided that any attempt to be clever was doomed to failure. What was needed was a simple, strong plan which kept the primary objective in sight at all times and would be easy for Ian, Gavin and Adrian to remember in the heat of battle.

Whatever happened, speed was of prime importance. Andy could decide to run for it at any time and we had a lot of ground to cover. The bunkers formed an almost solid wall which effectively blocked the line of sight across the whole battlefield. If we were going to have any chance of killing the evil Lord Varlak then we'd have to move quickly. Once we'd got past the bunkers then it would be much easier. There wasn't much cover there either, but this time it would act to our advantage as Lord Varlak would be in the open when he made his break for safety. If we could get past the bunkers then we should be able to hunt him down easily.

Having already discarded a complex plan, I fell back on a simple and well tested strategy that I've used many times before: a three-pronged assault. Whilst the centre kept the defenders busy, both flanks would sweep round behind the bunkers and cut off Varlak's escape. Simple but effective.

In the centre, the main body of the army would advance at top speed towards the bunkers. Their main task was to keep the enemy bogged down fighting them and to absorb as many of the Imperial Guard reinforcements as possible. As long as we could keep going forwards, casualties didn't matter. We could only win by killing Lord Varlak, and to do this we needed to force him from cover. We might scare him into the open by shooting up the bunkers, but he'd probably hold on until we got in amongst them and started blowing in the doors with our melta bombs. Then he'd have to run. My plan was to make

Jake Thornton,
Space Marine Commander.

sure that we were in position to cut him down when he did.

Our three Land Speeders would attack on the left. Nothing else could move rapidly over the Landing Pad so these skimmers were perfect for a surprise flank attack. If we were really lucky, Andy wouldn't have thought of this and might get caught with his forces in the wrong position.

On our far right, the Dark Angels would attack. Roaring onto the battlefield they would move behind the large rock formation, emerging on the far side with a panoramic view of Varlak's potential escape routes. It was a long way, but once in position they would be well placed to stop Andy's escape.

Ian Pickstock,
Space Wolves Commander.

Finally, we had a fourth, smaller group. This comprised our Whirlwind and other support weapons, and was to deploy as soon as it entered the board. From here, these weapons could provide valuable covering fire if any of the Imperial Guard relief columns did get behind us. This early deployment would also give them every possible chance to fire, rather than spending the battle in the back of a Rhino.

One final refinement to the plan was the attack formation in which our central assault would cross the enormous area of

Gavin Thorpe, Ultramarines Commander.

open ground in front of the bunkers. With so many guns inevitably concentrating their fire on an area with no cover, we'd be bound to take casualties before we reached the bunkers. There was no way round that. To ensure that we lost as few as possible, I suggested that we attack in an Armoured Wedge formation. This formation places your tanks in a triangular block, pointing at the enemy. The toughest and most heavily armoured tank goes at the front with progressively less heavily armoured tanks sweeping back to form a wedge or arrowhead. Inside this 'V' of heavily armoured vehicles is a protective pocket in which the troop carriers can be placed. The fact that the most heavily armoured tanks will take all the enemy fire, increases the survivability of all the vehicles in an Armoured Wedge.

Adrian Wood, Dark Angels Commander.

As the Armoured Wedge speeds into battle, the lead tanks use their heavy weapons to smash the foe. As the formation bursts through the enemy line, the Space Marines deploy from their Rhinos and assault the bunkers on foot.

So that was the plan. All that remained was to see how Adrian, Gavin, and Ian fared once the bolter shells started flying.

LORD VARLAK'S IMPERIAL GUARD

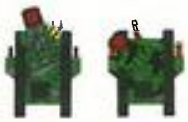
COMMAND CENTRE DEFENCE FORCE

Lord Varlak.

Ogryn Squad.

Imperial Guard Command Section.

Ad-hoc Support Squad with 2 lascannon and 1 autocannon.



2 Demolisher siege tanks. One is armed with multi-meltas and the other carries heavy plasma guns and is equipped with a *'Dozer blade*.

RELIEF FORCE JABBERWOCK

3 Leman Russ battle tanks. One with a *'Dozer blade*, one armed with a storm *bolter*, *Hunter-Killer missile* and a *heavy flamer*.

Rough Rider Command Section.

RELIEF FORCE PEGASUS

3 Leman Russ battle tanks. One with *Ablative armour*, one with *'Dozer Blade* and armed with three *heavy flamers*.

1 Rough Rider Squad.

RELIEF FORCE GRENDEL

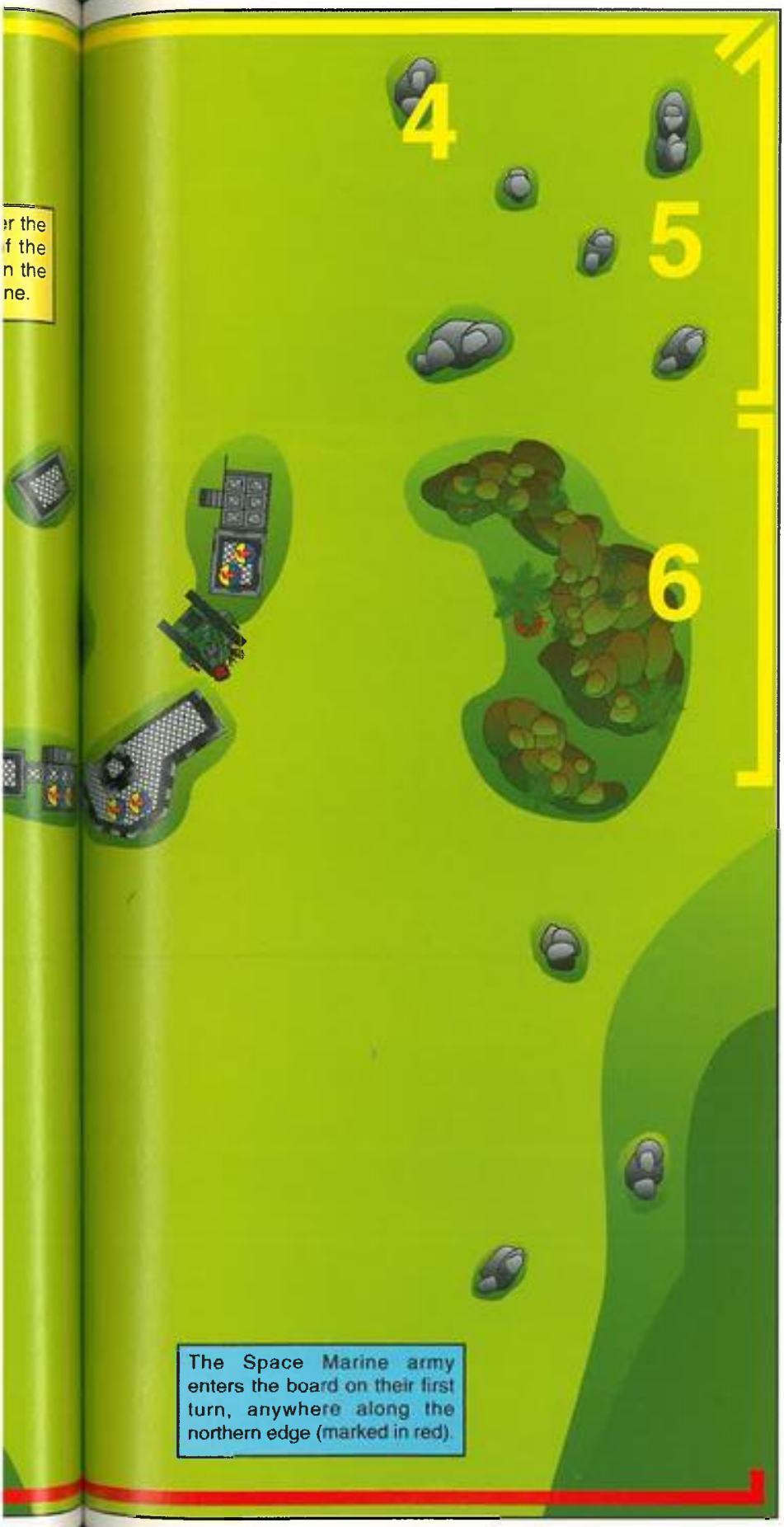
2 Chimera transports.

1 Leman Russ battle tank.

Support Squad with 1 missile launcher and 2 lascannon.

Imperial Guard Tactical Squad.

The Imperial Guard relief forces enter the board on a random turn, on one of the areas marked in yellow. Roll a D6 on the turn they arrive to determine which one.



The Space Marine army enters the board on their first turn, anywhere along the northern edge (marked in red).

SPACE MARINES ARMY

ULTRAMARINES

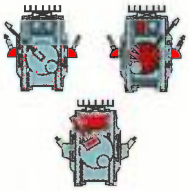
2 Rhino transports.

1 Whirlwind. 1 Razorback carrying an **HQ group** including a Commander, Chief Librarian Tigurius, an Apothecary, a Chaplain and a Techmarine.

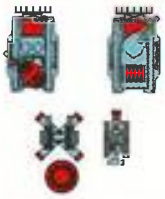
1 Tactical Squad, one combat squad in each Rhino.

1 Land Speeder.

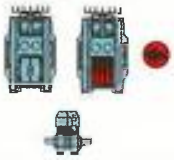
SPACE WOLVES



3 Predators in a single squadron. One has heavy bolters in its sponson mounts and twin-linked lascannons in its turret.



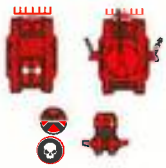
2 Razorbacks, one with reinforced armour. They carry a **Support Weapon battery** consisting of **1 Rapier** and **1 Tarantula** with servitor crew, each carried in its own Razorback.



2 Rhino troop transports with a **Blood Claws battle pack** carried in each.

1 Land Speeder.

BLOOD ANGELS



1 Rhino and **1 Predator.**

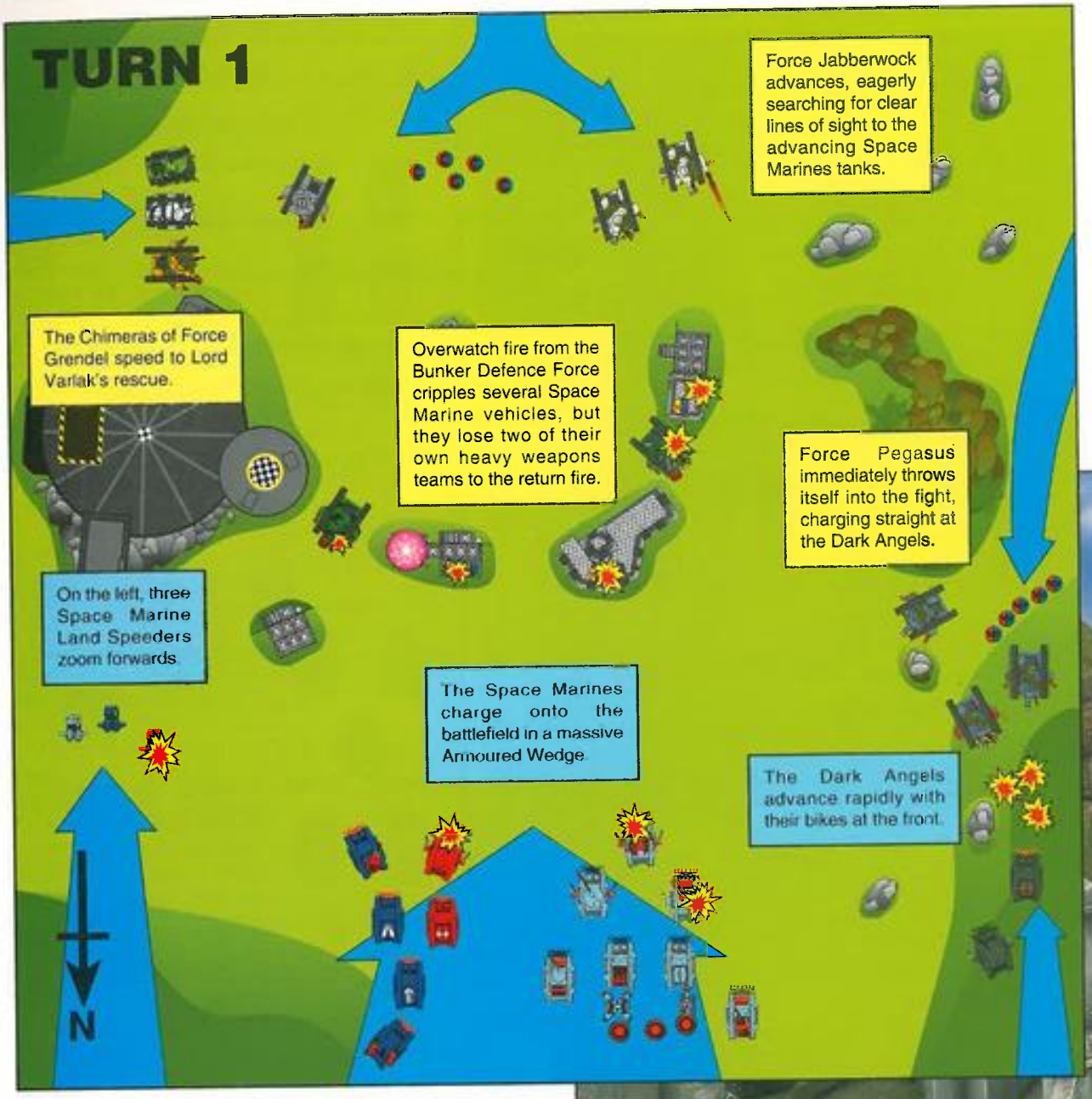
Blood Angels Death Company led by a **Chaplain,** and 1 **Land Speeder.**

DARK ANGELS

Rhino carrying a **Deathwing Terminator squad.**

1 Predator.

Space Marine Attack Bike with multi-melta, and an **Apothecary** on a **Bike.**



TURN ONE

"Task Force Beta, proceed to quadrant secundus. Cleanse the unpure infidels!"

Comm-link message from Commander Thorpe, Ultramarines Battlegroup.

Jervis: The Space Marines roared into the attack, throwing huge clouds of dust into the air as their tracks ripped up the parched earth. On their left flank, three Land Speeders, each from a different Chapter, moved directly towards the landing pad. On the right, the Dark Angels took advantage of the large rock formations to cover their advance as they attempted to encircle the bunker complex. In the centre, all of the remaining Space Marine vehicles advanced in a solid phalanx towards the command complex, with only the Ultramarines Whirlwind and the Space Wolves support battery holding back in order to provide covering fire for their battle brothers.

Once the Space Marines had completed their first move, the models belonging to the bunker defence force were placed on the table in the positions shown on the map. All of the support weapons and both of the Demolishers were on overwatch, and immediately opened fire on the advancing Space Marines. As the Space Marines were moving fast most of the Imperial Guard troops needed to roll 5's or 6's to score a hit. Even so, they managed to cause considerable damage knocking tracks off two Predators, destroying one of the side sponsons on a third, and killing the gunner on the Blood Angels Land Speeder.

The Space Marines immediately returned fire. Their high ballistic skill combined with the targeters fitted to most of their weapons meant that their fire was considerably more accurate than the Imperial Guard's, even though their enemy was in hard cover! Deadly volleys gunned down both Imperial Guard lascannon heavy weapon teams, and reduced the crew of the autocannon to a single model. Shot after shot slammed into the Demolishers, but despite the number of hits the only damage was to one of their side sponsons and a lascannon. All the rest of the attacks bounced off the thick frontal armour of these impressive Imperial Guard siege tanks.

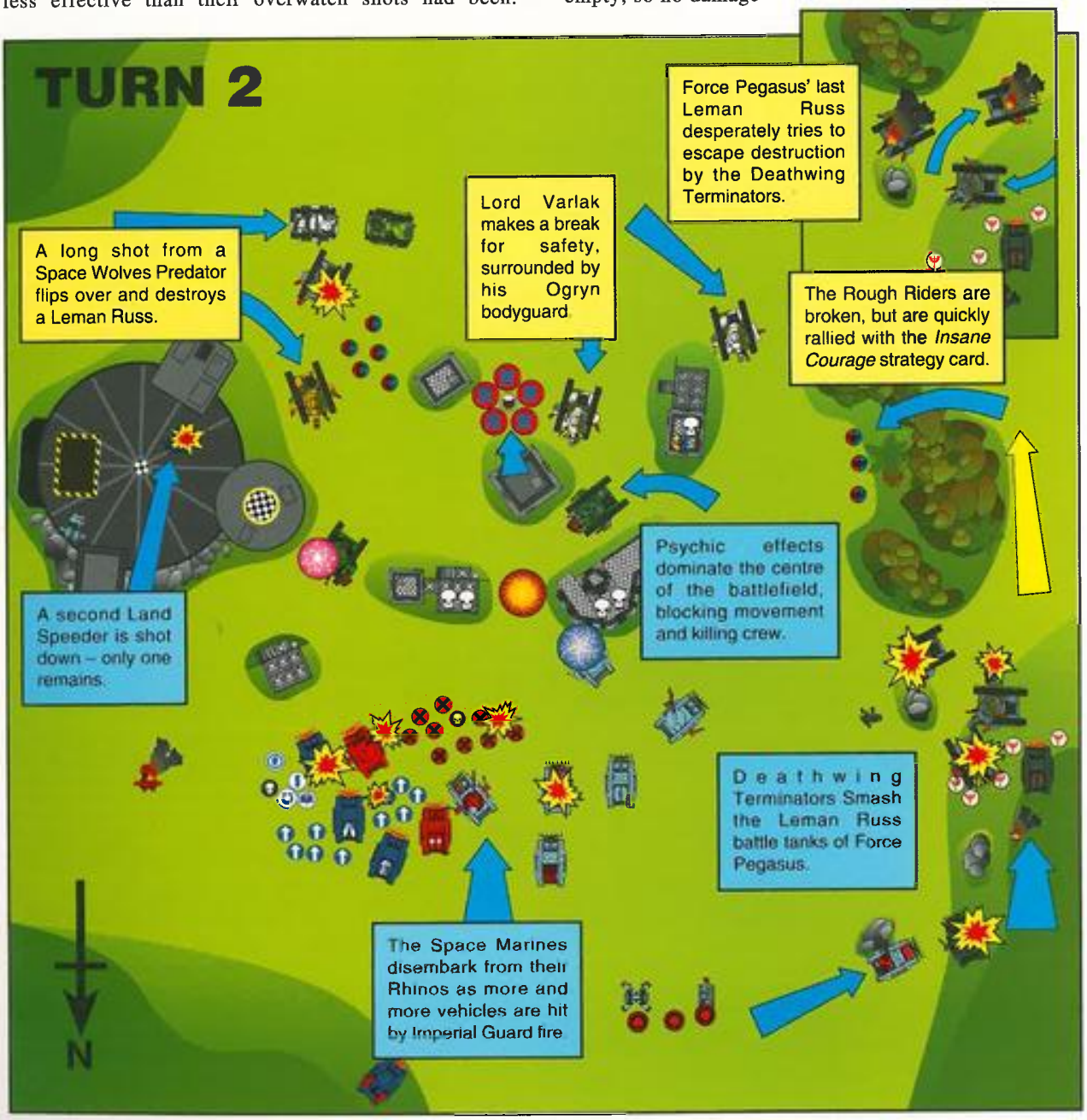
Right and below: *The Space Marine army roars onto the table as the battle begins!*

There was no hand-to-hand combat, and nothing of note happened in the psychic phase except Tigurius casting *Prescience* and a *Psychic Shield* upon himself. It was then the first Imperial Guard turn and, as noted in the introduction, each commander of an Imperial Guard relief force rolled a D6 to see if their troops arrived. As it was the first turn a roll of 4+ was required for each contingent to arrive. Much to Lord Varlak's relief (ho, ho!), all three sub-commanders managed to roll a 4 or more, and so all three arrived on the first turn!

A further D6 was rolled for each force to see where it came on, with the result that force Grendel entered from the east, Force Jabberwock entered from the south, and Force Pegasus from the west. All three relief columns entered at top speed, Forces Grendel and Jabberwock fanning out and moving quickly towards the bunker complex, while Force Pegasus roared forward to engage the Dark Angels at close range.

Imperial Guard shooting in their own turn was considerably less effective than their overwatch shots had been. Nonetheless, massed battle cannon shots from the Leman Russ tanks destroyed the Blood Angels Land Speeder, killed the Dark Angels Medic mounted on a bike, and destroyed all of the guns on the Dark Angels Attack Bike. Crucially however, none of the Space Marines' armoured vehicles were damaged by Imperial Guard fire, even though a number of vehicles took hits. The lead Space Wolves Predator alone took three hits, all of which bounced off its armour! Even the *Hunter Killer* missile fired by one of Force Jabberwock's Leman Russ tanks failed to cause any damage. Smiles started to return to the faces of the Space Marine commanders, who had been looking rather worried by the horde of Imperial Guard vehicles that arrived at the start of the Imperial Guard turn!

Once again there was no hand-to-hand combat, but the psychic phase proved somewhat more interesting than the first. Tigurius managed to nullify a *Machine Curse* cast by Lord Varlak, and then proceeded to *Smite* a nearby bunker. Fortunately for the Imperial Guard, the bunker proved to be empty, so no damage



The Space Marines finally reach the bunkers despite taking heavy losses from the Imperial Guard fire.

was done. I should point out at this point that, while Andy had placed most of his models on the table at the end of the first Space Marine movement phase, I decided that any hiding inside bunkers would not be revealed until they moved, made an attack, or a Space Marine model would be able to see inside the bunker. In this way the Space Marines would be kept guessing as to the location of Lord Varlak.

TURN 2

"This is Varlak. Get those Land Speeders now, NOW, damn you!"

Comm-link message from Lord Varlak, Supreme Commander Korsk II Planetary Defence Force.

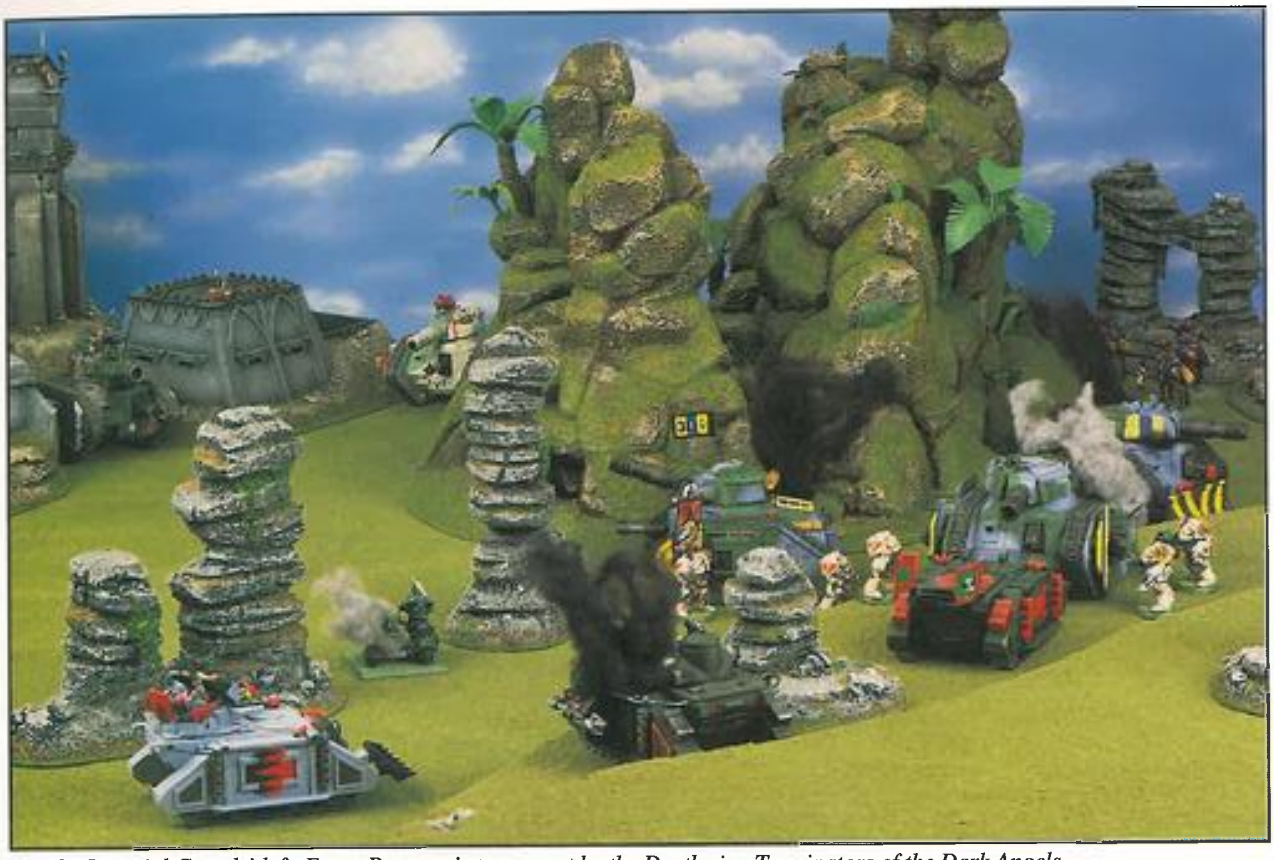
Jervis: The Space Marines advance continued across the entire front. To their left, both surviving Space Marine Land Speeders flew over the landing pad, continuing their outflanking move.

Meanwhile, on the right, the Dark Angels sped forward to engage Force Pegasus, the Deathwing Terminators leaping from their speeding Rhino to charge the Leman Russ battle tanks! As the tanks had moved more than 10" in their previous turn, Ian's new rule about charging moving vehicles came into effect. This meant that all of the Terminators had to make Initiative checks to avoid being hit by the moving vehicles. This resulted in two Terminators being knocked over for the turn, only their heavy armour saving them from being killed! The Rhino that the Terminators had jumped from was fitted with a ram bar, so it carried on with its move and also smashed into one of the Leman Russ battle tanks. Its victim, however, had ablative armour, which saved it from any damage.

In the centre, all hell broke loose as the two Predators that had lost tracks swerved out of control, disrupting the Space Marines' formation and forcing the following vehicles to slow down in order to manoeuvre round the stricken tanks. As the Space Marines force slowed down, the Blood Angels Death Company, the Ultramarines Tactical squad, and the Ultramarines command group dismounted. Meanwhile, at the back of the formation, one of the Space Wolves Razorbacks peeled off to help the Dark Angels against Force Pegasus.

Both Imperial Guard Demolishers had gone onto overwatch in the previous turn and now opened fire together with some of the Imperial Guard defenders that were hidden in the bunkers. Much to Lord Varlak's disgust, the overwatch shots failed to have much effect on the closely packed Space Marines, although one of the Death Company was killed by a scattering Demolisher cannon shell. The other Demolisher was rather more effective, destroying the Dark Angels Predator with a single well-aimed shot from its lascannon.

However, the cheers of the Imperial Guard commanders were quickly cut short by the Space Marines' return fire. A long shot by a Space Wolves Predator hit one of Force Jabberwock's Leman Russ in the tracks. Ian then rolled a 6 on the damage table, flipping the unfortunate vehicle over and destroying it completely! Next, the Ultramarines Whirlwind and Space Wolves support battery brought down a withering hail of fire on Force Pegasus, breaking the Rough Riders and destroying one Leman Russ. In the hand-to-hand combat phase, the Deathwing Terminators tore into the two surviving Force Pegasus tanks, destroying one Leman Russ and ripping the side sponson off the other. In the course of a single turn Force Pegasus had been reduced to one damaged Leman Russ and three broken Rough Riders!



On the Imperial Guards' left, Force Pegasus is torn apart by the Deathwing Terminators of the Dark Angels.

Cursing the Space Marines, Lord Varlak prepared to use his psychic powers to even the odds, calling down a *Machine Curse* on the nearest Space Wolves Predator, and nullifying the *Psychic Shield* protecting Tigurius. Nonetheless, as we started the second Imperial Guard turn there was no hiding the fact that things were looking grim for Lord Varlak's forces.

Perhaps it was this which convinced Lord Varlak to make a run for it, leaving the relative safety of his bunker and running towards the Imperial Guard vehicles of Force Grendel and Force Jabberwock which were speeding to his rescue. Meanwhile, the left hand Demolisher siege tank slowly turned round and started to head towards the centre of the complex, where it looked like the Space Marines might break through. On the left flank of the Imperial Guard, Force Pegasus' sole surviving Leman Russ did its best to extricate itself from the Terminators that surrounded it, while the Rough Riders fled back to the cover of the large rock formation behind them.

A confident Lord Varlak considers his next move.

It was now the Imperial Guard shooting phase, and it was obvious to all of us that if the Imperial Guard were to have any chance in the battle it was vital that they had a good round of firing this turn. Fortunately for them this is exactly what they did. Massed fire from the remaining Leman Russ battle tanks damaged the Dark Angels Rhino, destroyed one of the Space Wolves Razorbacks, and blew the Ultramarines Land Speeder out of the sky! The Demolishers then added to the carnage, blowing a sponson off the Blood Angels Predator with a lascannon shot, and scoring a hit with a Demolisher cannon on the Ultramarines Razorback. The ruined vehicle flipped into the air, the shattered remains crashing back to earth on top of a member of the nearby Ultramarines Tactical squad!

The second Imperial Guard turn ended with the most spectacular psychic phase so far. Lord Varlak maintained his *Machine Curse* on the Space Wolves Predator, and brought down a *Hellfire* on the gap between two of his bunkers in order to slow up the Space Marine attack in the centre. Tigurius, not to be outdone, called up *Prescience* and a new *Psychic Shield*, and then used *Smite* to kill one of the gunners in the nearest Imperial Guard Demolisher.

The turn ended with the play of the *Insane Courage* strategy card on Force Pegasus' Rough Riders, which rallied them immediately and gave them a free move.

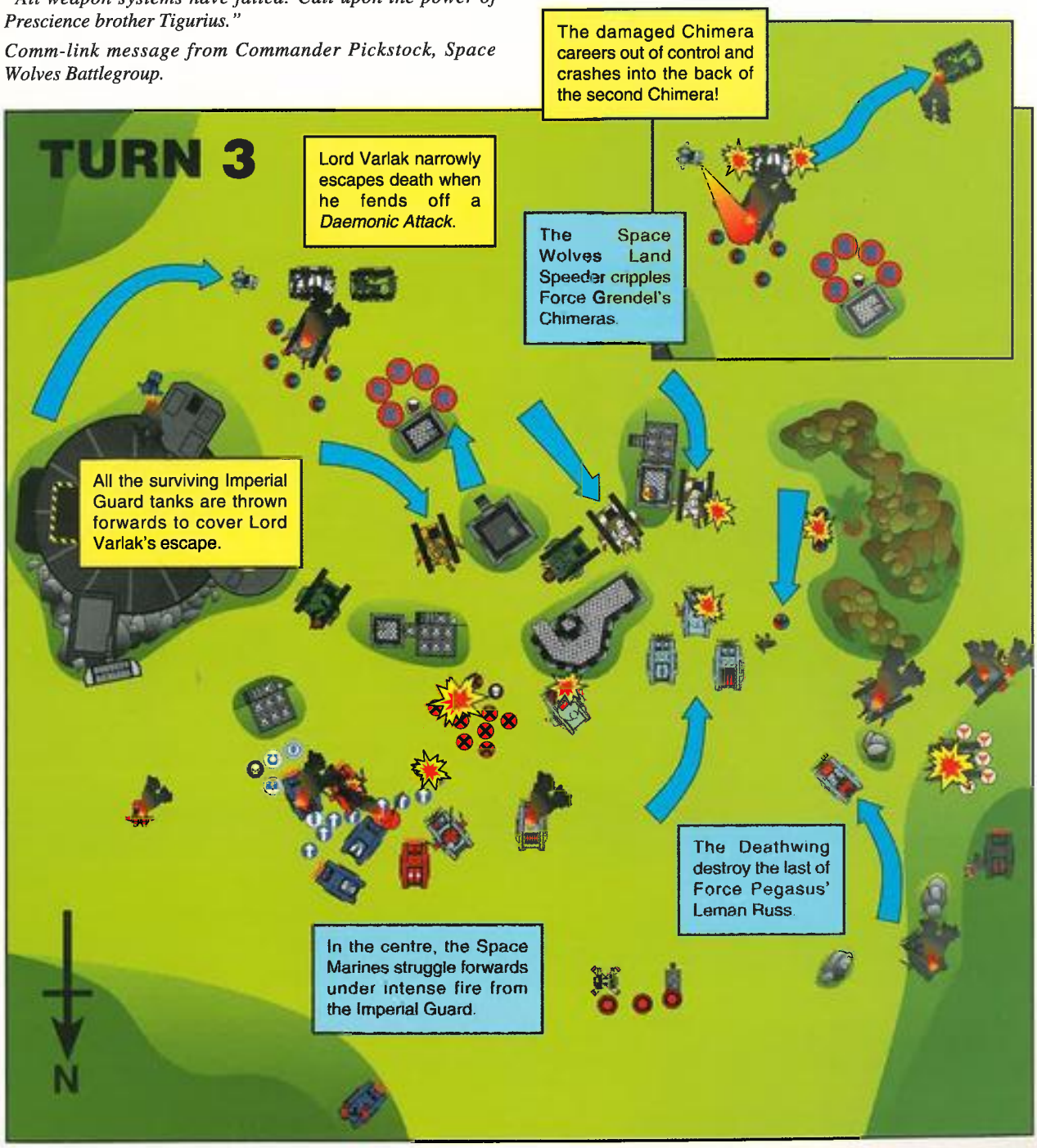
TURN 3

"All weapon systems have failed! Call upon the power of Prescience brother Tigurius."

Comm-link message from Commander Pickstock, Space Wolves Battlegroup.

Jervis: As we started the third turn it was obvious to both sides that the situation was very finely balanced. Well aware that Lord Varlak was getting away, the Space Marines moved as quickly as possible to cut off his retreat. The single remaining Land Speeder zoomed round behind Force Grendel, trying to use the vehicles themselves as cover, while it got into position to stop Lord Varlak escaping.

In the centre, the Death Company rushed towards the bunkers, supported by the Ultramarines Tactical squad and commanders. The two Space Wolves Rhinos and a Space Wolves Predator swept around the end of the line of bunkers, taking advantage of the fact that the Demolisher which had been covering this area had moved back out of sight. On the Space Marines' right, the Deathwing Terminators charged the last surviving Force Pegasus Leman Russ, while the Dark

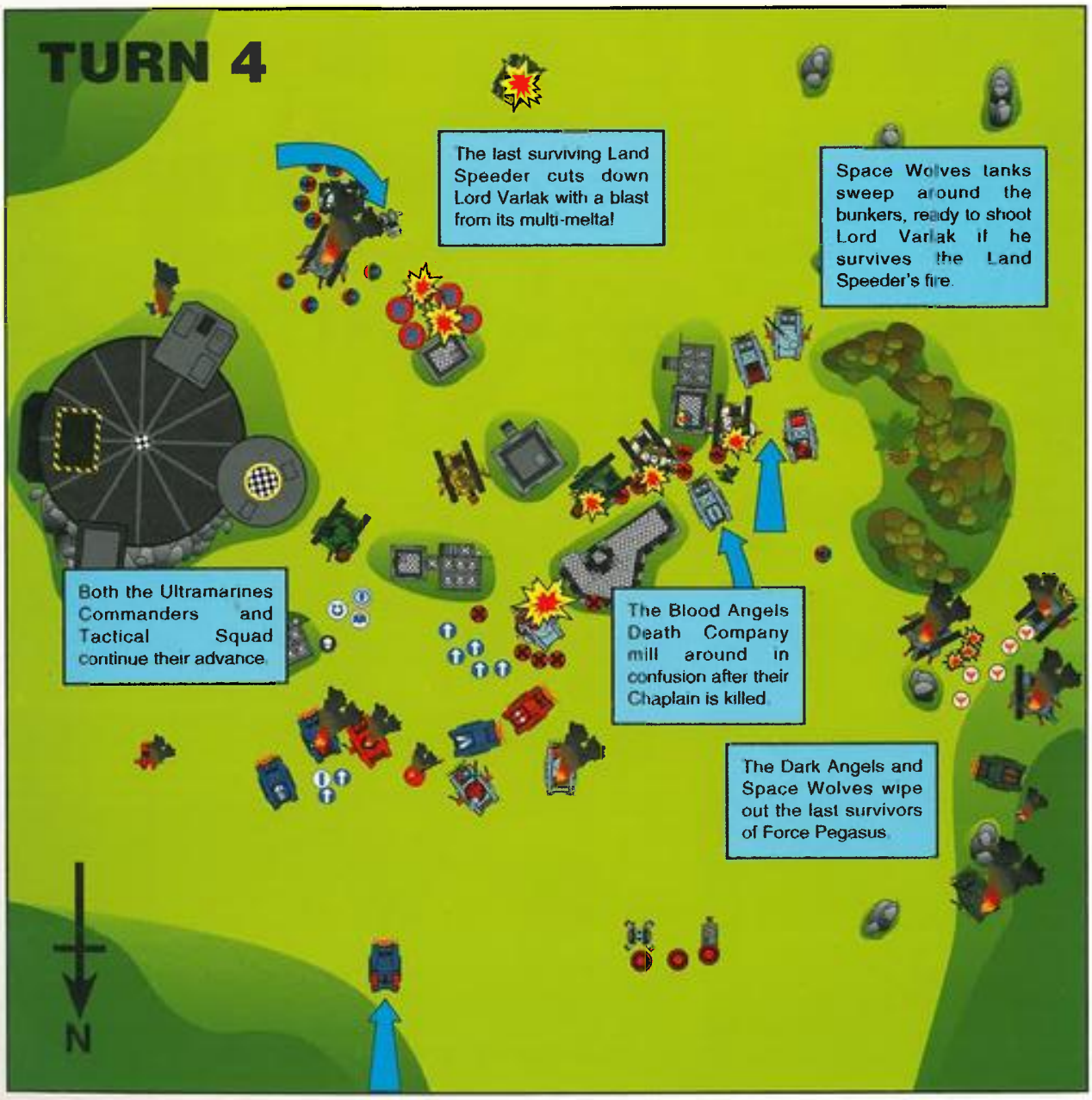


Angels Attack Bike and the Space Wolves Razorback moved up to support the Space Wolves vehicles which were outflanking the bunkers.

With one exception the Space Marine's fire was less effective on this turn than it had been previously, only succeeding in taking out a gunner in one of Force Jabberwock's Leman Russ and killing two of Force Pegasus' recently rallied Rough Riders. The exception was the attack made by the Space Wolves Land Speeder on the rearmost Chimera. Even using the new blast template rules, the Land Speeder's multi-melta easily blew a hole in the Chimera's hull, killing the driver and four passengers and sending it careering out of control. Next, the Land Speeder engaged the Rough Riders from Force Jabberwock with its heavy flamer, killing one of them.

The Deathwing carried on their execution, destroying the last of Force Pegasus' Leman Russ in hand-to-hand combat, although three of the crew survived and pulled themselves from the smoking wreckage. Force Pegasus now consisted of three vehicle crew and a single Rough Rider! In the psychic phase Tigurius was able to lift the *Machine Curse* from the Space Wolves Predator, aided by the effects of the *Prescience* he had cast on himself at the start of the phase. Lord Varlak contented himself with voluntarily lifting the *Hellfire* he had placed, thus exposing the Death Company who had moved up behind it.

The start of the third Imperial Guard turn was something of a disaster for Lord Varlak. As you'll remember, the Space Wolves Land Speeder had damaged one of the Imperial Guard Chimeras, and killed the driver. As it moved out of control, it crashed into the back of the second Imperial Guard Chimera, killing five passengers and the driver in the second vehicle! What's more, because the second Chimera had now lost its driver it too had to move out of control, swerving off at breakneck speed away from Lord Varlak! Distinct mutterings were heard from Lord Varlak at this point about "not being able to get the help these days… ", and "if you want a job done properly you have to do it yourself… "



The evil Lord Varlak is cut down by the incandescent fury of a multi-melta blast!

Making the best of a bad job, the survivors of the support squad in the first Chimera dismounted, while Force Jabberwock's Rough Riders moved round them to engage the Space Wolves Land Speeder. The rest of Force Jabberwock (supported by the last surviving Force Pegasus Rough Rider) moved forward to engage the Space Marines in the centre. Meanwhile Lord Varlak and his Ogryn bodyguard kept running towards the southern table edge.

In the Imperial Guard shooting phase the Blood Angels Death Company was subjected to a hail of fire, losing almost half their men in a single turn. Two Ultramarines were also blown to pieces by a scattering Demolisher cannon shell, and a second landed squarely on the turret of the Blood Angels Predator, blowing it to pieces. The Space Wolves Predator swinging round the flank of the bunker complex was hit several times by fire from Force Jabberwock's Leman Russ battle tanks, one hit penetrating the hull and killing the turret gunner and one of the sponson gunners. Meanwhile, the central Space Wolves Predator had a track blown off by Force Grendel's Leman Russ.

All in all it had been an extremely effective round of firing for the Imperial Guard army, and Lord Varlak would have been most happy, except for one thing – although subjected to a veritable hail of fire, the Space Wolves Land Speeder had survived the Imperial Guard combat phase unscathed and was now in position to attack Lord Varlak himself!

Muttering, again, about "having to do the job yourself" Lord Varlak prepared to cast *Machine Curse* on the Space Wolves Land Speeder – at which point Tigurius played *Daemonic Attack*! Not only did this automatically nullify the *Machine Curse*, but it also meant that Lord Varlak had a one-in-six chance of being dragged into the warp! Everyone held their breath as the dice was rolled... and came up with a 6! Lord Varlak was safe, for the time being at least.

TURN 4

Jervis: Although it looked like the game was almost certainly up for Lord Varlak, the Space Marines still had to carry on with their plan in case the Land Speeder was not able to kill the evil Korskian dictator. To this end, the Space Wolves Predator and one of the Rhinos that had been going round the flank of the bunker complex continued their wide sweeping move, getting into position to pounce on Lord Varlak if he should survive. The Predator and Rhino were joined by the surviving Space Wolves Razorback.

Meanwhile, the other Space Wolves Rhino swung off into the bunker complex, disgorging a battle pack of Blood Claws at the end of its move. These Space Marines then charged into combat with two of Force Jabberwock's Leman Russ and the nearest Demolisher. None of the vehicles being charged had moved more than 10", so the Blood Claws did not need to take initiative test to attack the vehicles safely. Behind them, the Dark Angels Attack Bike moved up to provide supporting fire.

In the centre, the Space Wolves Predator that had lost a track in the previous turn moved out of control, smashing into the bunker and flipping over. To add insult to injury, the wreck came crashing to the ground squarely on top of the Death Company Chaplain, killing him instantly! Deprived of their leader, and with no enemy within charge range, the survivors of the Death Company had to move randomly, and the majority of the models promptly headed off in completely the wrong direction!

No doubt muttering under their breath about crazed Blood Angels, the Ultramarines Tactical squad and commanders doggedly carried on with their advance, supported by the remaining Blood Angels and Ultramarines vehicles.

"You'll never take me alive Space Marine! NEVER, ya hear!!"

click... KER-WOOOOMP.

"AAAAAAAAAARGH!!!"

Last words of Lord Varlak, ex-Supreme Commander Korsk II Planetary Defence Force.

Finally, and most importantly, the Space Wolves Land Speeder swooped over the Chimera it had blasted in the previous turn, and came down directly in front of Lord Varlak and his bodyguard, its multi-melta humming ominously as it built up power to a full charge.

It was now the Space Marine shooting phase. In order to build up the suspense we decided to carry out the Land Speeder's attack last of all. However, it quickly became apparent that it was just as well for the Space Marines that they had Lord Varlak cornered, because their shooting proved extremely ineffective. One of the damaged Chimeras was finished off with a long range shot from a Space Wolves Predator, and the last survivors of Force Pegasus were gunned down by the Deathwing Terminators (who also finished off the Leman Russ crew) and Space Wolves support battery (who gunned down the last Rough Rider). But that was all. It was clear that if Lord Varlak survived the turn then the game could shift in favour of the Imperial Guard.

It was now time for the Land Speeder to fire. However, Lord Varlak had one last ace up his sleeve, for hidden in a nearby bunker were some Imperial Guard models he had placed in overwatch in the previous turn – if they could just get a lucky hit on the Land Speeder, Lord Varlak could still be saved! The volley of shots rang out and every one either missed or bounced off the Land Speeder's hull! Yelling his defiance, Lord Varlak could do nothing else except watch as the Land Speeder's multi-melta swivelled round, praying to the dark gods he worshiped that the Space Marines would miss. But Varlak's prayers went unanswered as with unerring accuracy the Space Wolves fired the multi-melta, engulfing Lord Varlak and his nearest Ogryn bodyguard in a conflagration which killed both instantly!

As Lord Varlak died, the Imperial Guardsmen who had been in his thrall came back to their senses. The battle was over. The Space Marines had won a quick but bloody victory!

WELL DID IT ALL WORK?

Jervis: All in all I was very pleased with the way the battle worked out. It proved to be exciting right up to the end, with many surprises for both sides. Ian's new rules worked very well, especially the rule about weapons with blast markers. In the game we found that this rule meant that armoured vehicles could only be damaged by a direct hit from a weapon with a blast marker, whereas light vehicles or infantry were vulnerable even if only caught on the edge of the blast. This seemed highly appropriate, and I think we will probably use this rule in all our games in future.

However, what I found most satisfying about the game was the way it showed how easy it is to fight a different sort of battle from usual. Warhammer 40,000 concentrates on one type of game – vicious close-range firefights between elite infantry formations. These can be assaults or raids behind enemy lines, or any other 'special operation' which is fought between hand-picked groups of combat veterans. All of the army lists we publish and the missions we have provided so far are tailored with this type of combat in mind.

Of course not all battles are like this. For example, you might want to fight out an enormous tank battle like we did, a space landing by an elite force against a poorly equipped planetary defence force, or whatever. Fortunately the Warhammer 40,000 game system is so flexible that it is simplicity itself to work out the few additional rules required to fight such 'variant battles'. *Heretic!* is a perfect example of how easily this can be done – after all, all I did was say there was no limit on the amount of vehicles and support troops each side could take, and invent a new mission!

What makes this type of variant Warhammer 40,000 battle so fascinating is that the tactics learnt playing normal games of Warhammer 40,000 no longer apply. In *Heretic!* this led to both sides making a number of quite elementary mistakes, even though all of the commanders were fairly experienced. For example, in a normal game of Warhammer 40,000 it is a bad tactic to keep troops inside a transport vehicle like a Rhino after the first turn, because if the vehicle is destroyed the troops will be lost as well. This is not much of a problem on a normal sized table, because it is possible for the transport vehicle to move wherever it is needed within a turn.

Bearing this in mind, the Space Marine players (with the notable exception of veteran vehicle commander Ian Pickstock) had all their troops dismount in the second turn. This proved a sensible tactic for the Terminators, who were almost single-handedly able to destroy Force Pegasus, but the other Space Marines found themselves out in the open a long way from any enemy troops, and with little chance of capturing Lord Varlak. The reason for this mistake was simple, the Space Marine commanders were just not used to fighting battles on such a large table or with so many vehicles.

There were number of other quite elementary mistakes made by both sides, but there would be little purpose in pointing each one out. The important thing was that with a few simple rules changes we were able to create a scenario that required the players to learn a whole new range of tactics. Almost all of the players in the game commented that they would "do things very differently" if we played a similar game in future – in other words they had learnt that the tactics required in a large, free-wheeling tank battle were very different to those needed for a close range infantry assault!

All of which goes to show how fascinating and entertaining fighting variant battles can be. The Warhammer 40,000 universe is a large place with a long and bloody history, that provides you with an almost limitless range of possibilities you can use to come up with ideas for exciting and different battles. All you have to do is make up a few special rules, find of group of players to fight the battle, and go for it!

What might have been – both sides discuss tactics in the aftermath of the battle.

THE HERETICS' CONFESSION

Andy: "Watch out for the Land Speeders" I said. Stupid, STUPID! How could I ignore my own advice so flagrantly? I can just about excuse leaving the tower in the first place because the Space Marines (curse their genetically-enhanced hides) started blasting away at it and I was getting worried about being squashed by falling masonry from my own penthouse. But after the Land Speeder toasted one of my two prospective taxis I really should have taken the hint and scuttled for cover in the bunker nearby. Instead I trusted to my minions' firepower and my own psychic powers to destroy the offending death machine, totally failed to affect it, and I got vapourised for my troubles.

We were very lucky with the reinforcements. Because of their prompt arrival, the defences held up brilliantly and were only just starting to crumble when the Space Marines killed Lord Varlak. The bunker defence force managed to stop any Space Marines breaching its outer perimeter and took a heavy toll of its attackers. I think that the two Demolishers were instrumental in this because their ferocious firepower effectively dominated the flanks and forced a lot of the Space Marines to push through the middle. In a defensive role, where their opponents were forced to close within their relatively short ranges, the Demolishers were absolutely lethal. Throughout the battle, they scored several heart-warming hits on Space Marine tanks, often destroying them with one shot!

Force Jabberwock made a good job of propping up the left, though they advanced a bit too far and were getting overrun by the Space Wolves. In part this was my fault for moving the left hand Demolisher towards the centre to mop up the Space Marines, in another part it was due to the faulty frag defender rounds being used by force Jabberwock and my Demolisher – not one of the three rounds they let off even injured a single Blood Claw!

Force Grendel was the victim of pure bad luck in losing not one but both Chimeras to the Land Speeder's first attack run. With hindsight, Gavin might have done better to disembark some or all of his troops (the support squad perhaps) near the edge of the table to cover the Chimera's advance, but that's with hindsight. Force Jabberwock and Grendel's failure to nail the last Land Speeder was just the sort of debacle I should have expected, but with the number of shots they had at it even I was amazed to see the Land Speeder still flying.

Force Pegasus achieved some good by keeping the Terminators out of the main fight, but they were completely wiped out by the veteran Space Marines in the process. I think Phil would have done better to send one of his Leman Russ to attack the Dark Angels head-on with the support of his Rough Riders. The other two tanks could then have given him fire support and might have lived long enough to also give Jabberwock some help against the Space Wolves. As it was, all three tanks careered into the midst of the enemy and were destroyed in short order by rampaging Terminators ripping them to pieces with their power fists.

Turning to the conduct of those accursed Space Marines, I would say my Primarch of the battle award goes to the Space Wolves. Not only did their Land Speeder kill Lord Varlak but the rest of their force had the good sense to outflank the bunker complex when it realised a frontal assault would be pointless. However, I think the Space Wolves Rapier and Tarantula support weapons were simply dumped in a poor position and barely got to fire – the Rapier alone was worth siting carefully as it could pierce tanks and bunkers with relative ease.

The Blood Angels and Ultramarines just made themselves into great targets for the whole game. By ignoring their great mobility and making a frontal assault against a fortified position (albeit a lightly manned one) they paid a high price in blood. If only that Land Speeder had been destroyed the Space Wolves would have had a sticky time bringing Varlak to book at all. In short, we wuz robbed, and I would have got away with it if it wasn't for you meddling Space Marines!

SPACE MARINES DEBRIEFING

Jake: Well, what can I say? It's always easy to assume that your plan was perfect if you won, and it did seem to go fairly well. However, after patting ourselves firmly on the back, it's also clear that some parts of the plan could have been better.

I still think that placing the support weapons at the back was a good idea, and they did do some damage early on. However, we should have moved them forwards once it was obvious the Imperial Guard reinforcements weren't going to outflank us.

Our other mistake was getting out of the Rhinos too early. If we hadn't been so alarmed by the mass of deadly Imperial Guard fire then we might have got in among the bunkers earlier. In the end though, I think we had them on the run. If the Land Speeder hadn't got Varlak then the Space Wolves and Dark Angels were on their way. There was no escape.

THE GREAT DEVOURER

By Andy Chambers, Ian Pickstock and Adrian Wood

As the might of the Tyranids spreads across the galaxy, whole worlds are consumed by the insatiable rampage of the hive mind. Isolated pockets of resistance desperately try to halt or even slow the seemingly indomitable hive fleet, but it is an all but impossible task...

TIDE OF FLESH

Andy: Amongst the millions of worlds in the Imperium, the Moloch system was an unremarkable place. Three of its planets harboured substantial Imperial colonies. Every five years Moloch I, II and III (as their rather dull inhabitants knew them) paid a modest stipend to the Imperium in precious gems, purified metals and heavy elements, so everyone was happy. Then the Tyranids came.

Before anybody knew they were under attack Moloch I and II had been overrun and their populations wiped out. The orbital defences were overwhelmed and the skies filled with falling spores bearing their murderous cargoes of Tyranids. Tens of thousands died trying to escape the cities of Coras and Benly. The Crownstar mines on Moloch I became a charnel house of terror when the Tyranids found thousands of mining families hiding there. In less than seventy-two hours there were no further transmissions from the besieged worlds, and the Governor of Moloch III was forced to consider them lost.

The night was alive with sound. Shrieks and roars echoed across the forest and sinister rustling shook the trees all around the brightly-lit refinery. Creeping shapes seemed to slither through the shadows just beyond the fragile circle of illumination. Haggard Imperial Guardsmen sent nervous bursts of lasgun fire into the trees but the creatures in the darkness were undeterred. In the ruins of the nearby pumping station Colonel Gurion stared at the map console, trying to massage some of the pain from his skull. A worried-looking Guardsman hovered nearby, waiting to give him the reply from headquarters.

He already knew what it would say; no relocation, no reinforcements, hold until relieved. His rag-tag command was the only thing standing between the Tyranids and the last route to the mountain fortress of Zharr. Every hour he bought with his men's lives gave the fortress time to prepare for the coming assault, but that was of little comfort to him.

The Orderly cleared his throat self-consciously and spoke. "Sir, there's someone outside you should speak to."

The Colonel gazed back at him steadily, puzzled by the man's tone of voice. "Well, bring him in then!"

The figure that stepped within the opening was unlike anything the Colonel had encountered on a dozen different worlds. Long, richly coloured robes hung from its slender frame in elegant folds and a smoothly curving mask concealed its features. Complex geometric runes adorned the figure and these betrayed its origin to him. Eldar, he thought, and one of their psykers by his appearance. Though the ancient race of the Eldar were not the Emperor's foes here on Moloch, they had been many times in the past and the Colonel had to make a conscious effort not to reach for his pistol. Something in the figure's stance told him that it was aware of his inner conflict. It spoke.

"Peace, son of Earth, there are enemies enough for both of us here."

Its voice was melodic yet it spoke Imperial Gothic with a precision which made it sound incredibly old. Hope and doubt fused together in the Colonel's heart. "You'll help us fight the Tyranids? This is Imperial business. Why would you help us?"

"I have followed the lines of fate. The mountain must not fall to the Great Devourer yet, but your men are already weakened within. The Devourer will not attack until dawn, withdraw from the refinery and we will fight in your place."

The figure stepped gracefully back through the entrance, its voice drifting back on the night breeze. "All races will fall before the Devourer in time, together or alone."

Outside, Eldar warriors in smooth armoured suits and tall, curving helmets moved up into position around the fuel storage tanks of the refinery. Elegant long-limbed war machines strode into place and sleek Jetbikes whispered past. The Colonel stood atop the command post and directed his own men into new positions around the pump house. The skies to the east were already tinged with pink in the pre-dawn light.

As Moloch III's slow orbit brought it ever closer to the ravaged worlds, feverish preparations were made to resist the imminent invasion. All of the remaining troops, civilians and equipment were evacuated to a series of giant mountain fortresses in the Thunderwall range. By the time the waves of Mycetic Spores filled the skies over Moloch III, an estimated 89% of the human population had reached safety below ground. Earthquakes, storms and volcanic activity shook the world as the Tyranids landed, as though the planet were already mortally wounded by the very presence of the invaders.

The Tyranids took almost two days to find the fortresses and another three days to destroy the first of them. The survivors fled and then fled again as the warriors of the hive mind destroyed each citadel in turn with ruthless efficiency. Soon only Zharr remained, the last and greatest hollowed mountain the Molochians could defend.

REFINERY 13

As thousands of men, women and children sought safety in Zharr itself, a small but determined force of Imperial Guardsmen fought as a rearguard around refinery 13 on the southern slopes of the mountain. One Tyranid assault had already been beaten off, but the Guardsmen were battleworn and weary. They knew they would be swept aside as soon as the Tyranids massed for another attack.

Gurion, the Colonel leading the force, desperately sought a way to save his men. He requested reinforcements but none were available, he sought permission to withdraw to the next defence line, but he was told that hundreds of civilians were still moving on the roads behind him and that his position must be held. Little did he know it but he was about to receive help from a most unexpected quarter…

THE BATTLE

Having recently completed Codex Tyranids I was keen to unleash the full horror of our new Tyranid army against some poor unsuspecting soul here at the Studio. After our Mega Tank-Fest the other month I felt that we would have to do a bit of an unusual battle just to keep things interesting.

Fortunately, Codex Tyranids includes several new missions for the Tyranids, and one of them is a particular favourite of mine called *Tyranid Attack*. In a *Tyranid Attack* the Tyranid player wins by destroying or driving off the entire opposing force! If any opposing models are still on the battlefield at the end of the game the Tyranids lose.

Because this mission is rather tricky (to say the least) the game lasts for six turns instead of the normal four, and the Tyranid player is allowed to "recycle" dead models to form additional waves of attacking Tyranids. Basically, when an individual model or brood is destroyed the Tyranid player can move it back into play from his own table edge on his next turn, if he rolls a two or more on a D6. This represents the following waves of Tyranids behind the initial assault force.

A *Tyranid Attack* always creates a very exciting and closely fought game, so I reckoned one would make a great Battle Report. I also wanted to use the largest Tyranid swarm I could muster, which would be worth around 3,000 points. But who to take down with this rampaging horde? Adrian and Ian expressed their willingness to participate and in the end we thought it would be fun for them both to take 1,500 points each and fight as a combined force against the Tyranids.

Adrian opted to use an Eldar while Ian decided to fight with the Imperial Guard using the recent White Dwarf articles and the basic Codex Army list from the Warhammer 40,000 game. As with all games here at the Studio we used the rules from the Dark Millennium supplement.

We played the game on one of our eight foot by four foot gaming tables and kept (somewhat chaotic) notes and maps on what happened as we played. We also took photographs of the game in progress and we've recreated some of these later with the aid of proper lights and equipment. This is so that you can fully appreciate the sumptuous terrain and gorgeous figures without the sight of stray dice, coffee cups and our ugly faces detracting from it!

THE ALLIANCE

Ian: When Adrian and I were asked to take part in this battle, we were more than pleased to take on the Tyranid horde. Then Andy told us of his plan for the Tyranids to fight two separate armies. As the horror of the Tyranids descends upon the galaxy, many races forget their differences and unite against the common foe. The alliance between the Eldar and the Imperial Guard was a shaky one at best, but we were determined to defeat the rampaging Tyranids.

For my half of the defending force I chose the Imperial Guard. The Studio's Imperial Guard army has grown steadily over the last few months as more and more impressive squads and armoured vehicles pour out of the forges of the Adeptus Miniatures Designicus. As you may know, I really like using tanks and as the Imperial Guard have more than anyone else I certainly wouldn't miss the chance to use them in battle!

CHOOSING THE ELDAR ARMY

Adrian: I had decided to combat this threat to the universe with the forces of the Eldar Craftworld of Ulthwé led by Eldrad Ulthran, their most potent Farseer. As I have commanded Eldar on many occasions I was quickly able to pick an army that would give Andy a run for his money. First I had to pick Eldrad's wargear. I decided to arm him with a fairly standard selection of a *Force Sword,* the *Staff of Ulthramar* and a *Psychic Hood.*

With Eldrad at the head of my army I felt confident that the psychic phase would be under my control. Tyranids are well known for being extremely dangerous in hand-to-hand combat, therefore the best way to defeat a Tyranid army is to shoot them down before they can get near you! However, Tyranids now have an array of long-range bio-weapons including venom cannons and Biovores.

I wanted a mobile army that could, if the worst happened, simply run away from the Tyranids. For some basic firepower I took a Dire Avenger squad, five Guardians with shuriken catapults and seven Guardians with lasguns. I then included some Warp Spiders led by an Exarch. These would be able to make hit and run attacks, using their warp jumps to attack and then disappear back into cover. Jetbikes are an almost essential part of any Eldar force, and as they are skimmers they would be immune to the horrifyingly effective close combat troops at Andy's disposal. To add some really serious weapons, I took a War Walker and a Dreadnought, whose heavy weaponry would be a threat to the Tyranid Warriors, Hive Tyrants and Carnifexes that would be attacking. For extra punch against these foes I also opted for some Wraithguard, whose deadly wraithcannon could kill even a massive Carnifex with one hit!

CHOOSING THE IMPERIAL GUARD

Ian: Here at the Studio the 'Eavy Metal team has painted enough Imperial Guard to form a fairly substantial army. You'll notice in the photos that I used a couple of old figures from Mike McVey's figure collection to represent a Colonel and a Commissar, while I also used a Techmarine to represent a Tech-Priest. If you are using your Imperial Guard army in a game, then it's okay to use any appropriate figures you can lay your hands on until the new models are available.

I would need to achieve a good balance between battle tanks and infantry, as each has different strengths against the Tyranids. Since we would be on the defensive, I decided to take a Demolisher siege tank. When the enemy are forced to get close it can pound them to little pieces! To keep it safe from marauding beasties like Genestealers and Hormagaunts, I upgraded it with frag defender rounds and a Tank Commander, and added the *Dozer-blade* and *Electro-hull* vehicle cards.

The infantry element of the army was very easy to pick – I chose as many Tactical squads as possible and the two command sections needed for these troops. While I was playing, Rick Priestley announced he had finished some new rules for Command sections. Although they weren't in time for me to use, we'll be bringing them to you in the next issue. After paying the points for all the heavy and special weapons that were carried by the models, I still had points left over to upgrade three of my squads to Veterans. The Cadian squads were both *Grizzled*, which would increase their chances of passing any Leadership tests, and the Mordians had a *Slick Crew* as this could double their lascannon's rate of fire!

THE ALLIED PLAN

Adrian: The dense terrain on my side of the battlefield would hopefully hinder Andy's broods more than my army. With my Jetbikes and Warp Spiders I should be able to turn the whole area into a killing ground, with some added crossfire from the Wraithguard and other squads! The war machines would take up position in and around the refinery, using its mass to shield them from the heaviest of the Tyranid firepower. My plan was basically to keep out of trouble and absorb the brunt of any Tyranid assault that headed my way.

Ian: My contribution to this battle was relatively simple. My squads would do their utmost to cling tenaciously to the thin belt of ground that the Emperor had granted them. The Catachan Jungle Fighters, Cadian Shock Troops and Mordian Iron Guard, together with both Command sections, would hold the ruins on our left. This area would provide lots of hard cover and also place as much open ground between me and the Tyranids as possible. The Guardsmen's orders were to stand and fire at the smaller bio-horrors like Termagants and Genestealers. If anything larger than a Termagant or a Genestealer came their way then they were under orders to retreat, spread out and try and survive as long as possible. Hopefully this would give the weapon teams enough time to bring their heavy weapons to bear on any immediate threats.

Meanwhile, my Demolisher would be blasting the Tyranids to pieces as they came over the hill! After taking a pounding from the Demolisher, Andy might rethink his plan of attack, pushing his Tyranids toward the waiting Eldar or the crossfire from the Imperial Guard infantry in the ruins.

MOLOCH III DEFENDERS (3000 points)

IMPERIAL GUARD

COLONEL

Laspistol, power sword, frag grenades, carapace armour, *Vortex Grenade*, *Aegis Suit*, and *Displacer Field*.

ADEPTUS PSYKER LORD

Laspistol, flak armour, and *Force Rod*.

TECH-PRIEST ENGINEER

Laspistol, power axe, power armour, *Servo Arm*, and *Power Field*.

COMMISSAR

Laspistol and Chainsword.

CATACHAN COMMAND SECTION

The Lieutenant has a bolt gun. The weapons team has missile launcher and the Sergeant has a bolt pistol and chainsword.

CADIAN COMMAND SECTION

The Lieutenant has a lasgun. The weapons team has a missile launcher and two Imperial Guardsmen have melta guns. *Grizzled*.

TALLARN DESERT RAIDERS

The weapons team has an autocannon, one Guardsman carries a melta gun, and the Sergeant carries a sword and plasma pistol.

CADIAN SHOCK TROOPS

Equipped with a heavy bolter, flamer and a Sergeant with a bolt pistol. *Grizzled*.

DEMOLISHER SIEGE TANK

Heavy plasma guns, frag defender rounds, Tank Commander, *Electro Hull*, *Storm Bolter*, and a *Dozer Blade*.

MORDIAN IRON GUARD

Weapons team has a lascannon, one Guardsman carries a grenade launcher, the Sergeant has a bolt pistol and chainsword. *Slick Crew*.

CATACHAN JUNGLE FIGHTERS

The weapons team has a missile launcher, one Guardsman has a melta gun and the Sergeant is armed with a bolt pistol and chainsword.

ELDAR

ELDRAD ULTHRAN

Laspistol, rune armour, *Staff of Ulthramar*, *Force Sword*, *Psychic Hood*.

EXARCH

Two death spinners, *Warp Jump Generator*.

JETBIKES

Six Guardians on jetbikes, one with a shrieker shuriken cannon.

WARP SPIDERS

Four Warp Spider Aspect Warriors

DIRE AVENGERS

Five Dire Avenger Aspect Warriors.

WRAITHGUARD

Five Wraithguard.

GUARDIANS

Seven Guardians with lasguns.

Five Guardians with shuriken catapults.

WAR WALKER

Scatter laser and lascannon.

DREADNOUGHT

Power fists, shuriken catapult, flamer and heavy plasma gun

SPAWNING THE SWARM

Choosing the Tyranid swarm for this battle was very tricky because my two opponents have very different strengths. The Imperial Guard would probably be relatively immobile but pack a lot of firepower with their numerous heavy weapons and battle tanks. The Eldar, on the other hand, would doubtless be less numerous but far more mobile. This meant I would be looking for a force comprising of fast creatures, durable creatures and things which could hit enemy concentrations with covering fire! Fortunately, the Tyranids have lots of troops genetically engineered to be tough, fast, or whatever. The fact that we would be fighting a *Tyranid Attack* also altered the composition of my force slightly. I selected broods which were the minimum size for their kind. This meant that they would be wiped out and return as reinforcements quickly.

With these points in mind I started picking my army by including both of the Hive Tyrants we have painted. Both carry lash whips and boneswords for close combat, and a heavy weapon for inflicting great harm at a distance. One Hive Tyrant is armed with a horrific barbed strangler, while the other has a deadly venom cannon. The barbed strangler and the venom cannon both affect a wide area, so are particularly lethal against large concentrations of the enemy. Tyranids get to select what psychic powers they want to take, rather than randomly drawing from a card deck. So, the next thing was to choose the Hive Tyrants' psychic powers. I decided to keep these to a minimum, concentrating on those that would disrupt the enemy's efforts. I took *Psychic Scream* for both Hive Tyrants, which only affects enemy psykers but it has a huge range and those who hear it can be stunned or driven mad by its potency. I also took *The Horror* for the Hive Tyrant with the venom cannon. This power sends out a wave of psychic terror which forces foes nearby to take a Break test.

The next two models were Lictors – hunting horrors that stalk ahead of the Tyranid horde and scout out the enemy. These would be particularly useful because they could infiltrate the battlefield at the start of the game. Lictors carry a whole armoury of bio-engineered weaponry and are deadly enough to kill off heroes and psykers in hand-to-hand combat. The two Lictors and Hive Tyrants formed all of the individual Tyranids available. Sadly we had no Zoanthrope miniatures (though I've seen the model since and its a blinder!) so their potent psychic blasts would be denied to me. This meant that destroying tanks might be a bit of a problem as Zoanthropes are definitely the best anti-tank weapons in a Tyranid force.

With nearly a thousand points already spent I turned my attention to getting some heavy support. Two Carnifexes were available so I took both of these without hesitation. They would be tough enough to spearhead my attack and strong enough to rip apart battle tanks with their four great claws. I also took two Biovores to give me long range support. These walking artillery pieces launch other organisms called Spore Mines which move randomly and explode when non-Tyranids are nearby. This makes them ideal for disrupting the enemy, forcing troops out of their well-prepared defenses.

The last time I had played against Eldar I suffered real problems with their highly manoeuvrable units like Jetbikes and Warp Spiders. It was important to render some areas of the battlefield too dangerous for the enemy to enter, so I took a brood of Spore Mines which I would deploy on one flank of my force and leave them to drift randomly, making it an untenable area for the foe to enter.

With the free floating Spore Mines the support troops had brought my total to just under 1500 points and I moved onto picking the broods that would make up the bulk of my force. The first things I took were two broods of six Hormagaunts. These are ideal as they are inexpensive, good in hand-to-hand combat and very fast. The next thing I wanted in my army was hordes of Termagants. Two broods took spike rifles for long range firepower, the other three broods were equipped with shorter ranged fleshborers and a few stranglewebs for dealing with well protected opponents. The Termagants would be used as a skirmish screen and to add numbers in multiple combats against tough opponents. The next broods I was keen to include were some Gargoyles. These would be particularly useful in a *Tyranid Attack* because of their great speed and their ability to fly high allowing them to swoop down anywhere in the following turn. This meant that no corner of the table would be safe from my swarm. They would be especially handy for flushing stragglers out of cover with their flamespurt symbiote weapons.

Since Termagants, Hormagaunts and Gargoyles are all fairly cheap I still had points left to buy some more dangerous broods. Tyranid Warriors are essential to any self-respecting swarm, not only are they excellent warriors but they also extend the influence of the hive mind. On top of all this, they are also big enough to distract attention from the Hive Tyrants. I took two broods of Tyranid Warriors armed with deathspitters, so that they could move and keep the enemy pinned down with a hail of fire. I also took two broods of Genestealers to destroy enemy units and vehicles in hand-to-hand combat. I still had some points left to spare so I took a relatively cheap brood of Tyranid Warriors armed with boneswords to take out opposing characters in close combat. Tyranid Warriors with boneswords can parry twice and cut down enemy characters in short order.

BIOMORPHS

Biomorphs are bio-engineered improvements for the larger Tyranids which give them psychic abilities, thicker chitin, venomous claws and so on. The Eldar Farseer was bound to be a problem so first on my list was some *Null Zones* to protect against psychic powers and warp-based attacks such as Vortex grenades and distortion cannons. I gave these to both Hive Tyrants. The Eldar and the Imperial Guard both have access to rapid fire weapons, in the form of scatter lasers and multi-lasers, which can cut troops down in swathes. However, they only have a -1 save modifier, so *Hardened Carapaces* for my Hive Tyrant with venom cannon and one brood of Tyranid Warriors would protect them from the majority of enemy fire. The enemy characters were bound to be protected by a variety of armour fields, so I gave the Hive Tyrant with venom cannon and one of my Lictors a *Voltage Field*. This would offer them protection and also short out nearby enemy energy fields. The other Lictor was given a *Bio-plasma Attack*, so it could really wreak havoc behind enemy lines. As a precaution to counter the conversion fields I might face, I gave *Optic Membranes* to my Tyranid Warriors with boneswords.

TYRANID SWARM (3000 POINTS)

INDIVIDUALS

HIVE TYRANT

Venom cannon, lash whip, bonesword, *Psychic Scream, The Horror, Hardened Carapace, Null Zone, Voltage Field.*

HIVE TYRANT

Barbed strangler, lash whip, bonesword, *Psychic Scream, Adrenalin Sac, Warp Field, Null Zone.*

LICTOR

Bio-Plasma Attack.

LICTOR

Voltage Field.

SUPPORT

CARNIFEX

Adrenaline Sac, Toughened Exoskeleton.

CARNIFEX

Adrenaline Sac, Aura of Torment.

BIOVORES

Two Biovores, each containing six Spore Mines.

SPORE MINES

Six extra Spore Mines.

BROODS

HORMAGAUNTS

Two broods of six Hormagaunts each.

GARGOYLES

Two broods of six Gargoyles each.

GENESTEALERS

Two broods of six Genestealers each.

TERMAGANTS

Two broods of six Termagants, and one brood of seven. Each brood is armed with fleshborers and has two Termagants armed with stranglewebs.

Two broods of six Termagants armed with spike rifles.

TYRANID WARRIORS

Two broods of three Tyranid Warriors armed with deathspitters. One brood has *Hardened Carapaces*, the other *Toughened Exoskeletons*. One brood of Tyranid Warriors armed with boneswords, with *Optic Membranes*.

I decided to give both Carnifexes and the Hive Tyrant with barbed strangler an *Adrenalin Sac* so that they could run and shoot in the same turn. Now all three of these monstrosities would be able to run 12" onto the table and fire on the first turn! If they were killed and came back, this would also allow them to get back into the fray much quicker. In addition, I gave one of the Carnifexes a *Toughened Exoskeleton*. I also gave this Biomorph to the other Tyranid Warrior brood with deathspitters, increasing the Carnifex's Toughness to an impressive 9 and the Tyranid Warriors' to 6. I gave the other Carnifex an *Aura of Torment*, this would reduce the Leadership value of any enemy troops within 8" by two. Hopefully, this would make those Imperial Guard flee in terror at the mere sight of my Carnifex! With the last of my Biomorphs chosen I found I was just a few points shy of 3000. These were easily swallowed up with an extra Termagant and another Spore Mine and I was all ready to come up with my insidious plan.

THE INSIDIOUS PLAN

KILL THEM ALL! That was the broad approach, but more specifically I reckoned that it would be imperative to fight the two armies ranged against me one at a time. If I could use the terrain to screen me from one enemy force, I could direct my full fury against the other. If I could pull this off it meant that I would be fighting with two to one odds and I could destroy one opponent quickly before turning against the other. Also, if I made my initial thrust against one opponent with virtually my whole force I could break through the enemy line and then spread out left and right to mop up the survivors. This plan would push the enemy forces towards the middle of the table where the later waves of Tyranids could play an active role.

I decided the best way to achieve this objective was to attack in a column so that my units could fit onto a suitably narrow frontage. This would ensure that most of the casualties I suffered would be on the leading units, leaving those behind intact enough to overwhelm the enemy positions. Since I was going to have to deploy first because of the Tyranids low strategy rating, I decided to come up with a plan on how to do it beforehand. I had fourteen broods in the army so I condensed my deployment down to three adjacent columns of four units each with the two Gargoyle broods placed out on the flanks. The most valuable broods (Tyranid Warriors and Genestealers) were placed at the back of the columns so that they could remain intact and deliver a knock-out punch when they arrived. The influence of the Hive Mind would ensure that the broods of Termagants taking all the fire at the front wouldn't break and flee, as long as the Tyranid Warriors were within 12". This was reinforced by the Hive Tyrants whose hive mind influence extends 18".

As ever this plan needed a little bit of adaptation to fit in with the area available for deployment and the terrain to be negotiated. I decided that the area between the main refinery storage tanks would offer the most covered approach to the opposite side of the table, and lined up my column to go through there. A number of broods had to squeeze up or move slightly but I anticipated that things would sort themselves out as I advanced. I concealed one Biovore in the woods and placed the other at the bottom of the rocky bluff on one side of the hill. The Tyranid Warriors with deathspitters lined up so that they would be able to clamber up the cliff and gain a good field of fire to the right once the game got underway. I placed the Spore Mines in the open area to my right to stop Jetbikes using it as a racetrack. The Lictors were deployed after the Imperial Guard and Eldar in the plentiful protection supplied by the woodlands on the left.

FIGHTING THE HIVE MIND

When you are under attack by Tyranids, the destruction they wreak is absolute. The Hive Mind engulfs everything and leaves nothing alive. As your psychic capabilities are nullified and communications are cut off, mass confusion reigns on the battlefield and commanders can find themselves being attacked on every side and even from within their own ranks!

In games of Warhammer 40,000 these disruptions are represented by rolling on the special event tables in Codex Tyranids. These rolls are made before either side deploys and before any Strategy cards are played. Every single squad, vehicle or character can be affected, from being delayed to having an embryonic beast growing inside them!

So it was with a sense of dread that Adrian and Ian watched me roll for each element of the opposing armies. Rather happily, I rolled a plethora of fives and left the Imperial Guard with an army that was already half absorbed by the Hive Mind. Three of Ian's squads, the Tallarn Desert Raiders, the Cadian Shock troops and the Cadian Shock Troops Command section were all affected by the *"Jones is acting strangely..."* event. This meant that during the battle a barbed strangler beast could suddenly burst from a randomly determined member of each squad! The Mordian Iron Guard suffered from the *"We can't take it any more!"*. This meant that now they counted all Tyranids as causing *Fear* and treat those that normally cause Fear as *Terror*.

All of Ian's characters escaped except the Commissar, who has fought so many battle against Tyranids that his mind had been twisted to such an extent that he *Hates* all Tyranids. Then, to add insult to injury, even the prized Demolisher tank was affected by the *"What the *****!"* result, which meant that a violent Skulker had nestled somewhere inside and would burst forth causing havoc if the vehicle moved! Unfortunately, I expect Ian had no plans for moving the Demolisher, which is at its best when it is stationary.

Well after that little lot Ian was definitely beginning to suspect that something sinister had got into the company's rations, or that his men had been taking some unauthorised leave. I then turned my attention to the Eldar forces. With bated breath we waited expecting yet more carnage, but much to my immense frustration the entire Eldar force escaped completely unscathed!

DEPLOYMENT

ALLIED TURN 1

Ian: I wanted full control of my battle zone, so I sent the Mordian Iron Guard and Catachan Jungle Fighters running for cover, leaping over the rubble. The Cadian Shock Troops advanced more cautiously, snapping off lasgun shots at the Spore Mines, detonating one of them. Up on the hill the Colonel, Tech-priest and Adeptus Psyker moved into the cover of the chemical plant. The rest of the Imperial Guard forces set overwatch, ready to shoot at the slightest sign of movement.

Adrian: Lictors have special colour-shifting scales that allow them to only be Detected by troops who can spot them, which in turn means that they are immune to enemy fire except weapons which cover an area. For this reason, I sent the Warp Spiders to hunt them, their death spinners liquefying one of the stalking beasts. My War Walker advanced to secure the chemical plant. From this vantage point its scatter laser blazed in a fury of criss-crossed beams, scything down four Termagants, while its lascannon struck the closest Carnifex. The Eldar troops looked on in dismay as the Carnifex simply ignored the blast.

The allied commanders check their lines of fire.

Undaunted by the War Walker's failure, the Dreadnought took its stand at the centre of the chemical plant. The machine fired its heavy plasma gun on maximum power at the second Carnifex which disappeared in a blaze of white hot plasma. The victorious cheers of the Eldar died in their throats, as it also emerged totally unscathed. Cursing Andy's good luck with his saving throws, I began to understand how Carnifexes earned their fearsome reputation. From the shadow of the Dreadnought, the Dire Avengers sent a hail of fire into the advancing horde, only to kill a single Termagant. To cap it all, my *Orbital Barrage* Strategy card only succeeded in blasting a single Genestealer! This was not a good start.

The psychic phase began with Eldrad casting *Doom* on a Carnifex. Neither of Andy's Hive Tyrants were able to nullify the power so the beast had better duck next turn! In reply, the Hive Tyrant at the rear of the Tyranid line cast *Psychic Scream* in an attempt to crush all psychic resistance, only to find itself fighting off a *Daemonic Attack*! Eldrad continued his assault by casting *Mind War* on the Doomed Carnifex, but I failed to roll any sixes and the power didn't damage the monster. Andy then replied with the second Hive Tyrant, again playing *Psychic Scream*. Ian rolled under both his Adeptus Psyker's Leadership and Strength, easily avoiding having his psyker's brains fried. Unfortunately, I rolled an eleven on 2D6 and Eldrad Ulthran fell to the floor writhing in agony. The Eldar stood shocked at the loss of their commander, and the Guardians armed with lasguns broke and hunkered down in the cover of the hill.

TYRANID TURN 1

Andy: My pleasure at the untimely demise of Eldrad was only slightly marred when I failed to get the Lictor back as a reinforcement. I continued to chortle even though none of the Imperial Guard succumbed to the gestating barbed stranglers in their squads. Still grinning, I sent my swarm belting forward onto the attack. One brood of Gargoyles charged forward to close combat some of the Warp Spiders and the War Walker, though only half of the brood made contact. The other brood of Gargoyles flapped high up into the sky on their leathery wings so that they could swoop down to attack any target next turn. As my rampaging tide of flesh swept up over the hill it came under a hail of fire from the Imperial Guard. Fortunately,

The Eldar bravely try to stem the Tyranid tide.

because the creatures were fast moving targets and just coming into view, the fire was inaccurate. Even the Demolisher cannon shell flew wide of its mark and merely gouged a great chunk from the hillside. Nonetheless, two Termagants were vapourised by the siege tank's heavy plasma guns, and a Tyranid Warrior was struck by no less than five heavy bolter rounds! Even so, the creature's *Hardened Carapace* saved it as four of the shells ricocheted off its thickened shell, the fifth inflicted only one wound and the beast survived!

A salvo from a Hive Tyrant's venom cannon bounced off the Eldar Dreadnought but destroyed a Jetbike and wounded the Adeptus Psyker. The two Biovores belched their Spore Mines across the battlefield but they scattered wildly, one even missing the table altogether. On the left the Lictor slew a Warp Spider with its bolt of bio-plasma. The Tyranid Warriors fired a barrage of deathspitter rounds at the distant, scuttling figures of the Imperial Guard but the range was too great and targets too well concealed. Finally, both Carnifexes (making use of their *Adrenalin Sacs* to run forward and fire) vomited their bio-plasma at the Eldar Dreadnought. The ferocious attack engulfed the slender war machine, sending it sprawling into the silo with a melted left arm and a cracked spirit stone!

The Gargoyles took the opportunity to ambush the Warp Spiders and tore at them with their claws but only one Aspect Warrior succumbed to the assault. Despite being mediocre in close combat, the War Walker batted another Gargoyle out of the air and left me staring down its scatter laser and lascannon. In the psychic phase I unleashed the Hive Tyrant's *Psychic Scream* again. Ian's psyker failed to nullify the dangerous power and promptly keeled over with blood pouring from his ears. Complete psychic superiority had now been achieved! With the forces in the refinery reduced to a crippled Dreadnought and a Dire Avenger squad, I felt confident that I would be able push my attack through next turn. Of course, I still needed to tackle the Demolisher tank...

ALLIED TURN 2

Adrian: Having taken a severe hammering in the centre, I began to take a more cautious approach. My War Walker and Guardians fired at the Gargoyles, killing three of their number, but the Lictor proved too agile a target as it ducked and dived free of all the Warp Spiders' deadly monofilament clouds.

Ian: I played my *Booby Trap* Strategy card in the refinery, where the foe was massing. The concealed bombs killed three Hormagaunts and the risk of further explosions would prevent all but the largest of Tyranids from attempting this route again.

The battle for the refinery at its height!

Adrian: After Ian's timely interruption I continued with my attack. The Dire Avengers and the damaged Dreadnought opened fire on the surviving Hormagaunts with shuriken catapults and a flamer, killing four of them. Accelerating to combat speed, the Eldar Jetbikes sped forward to take the Tyranids head on. My plan was to distract the huge Tyranid Warriors who had started to take pot shots at the Imperial Guard. To my great disappointment the Jetbikes sprayed shuriken discs at the Tyranid Warriors with absolutely no effect whatsoever! My Jetbikes were now sitting ducks. The Warp Spider exchanged hand-to-hand blows with a Gargoyle, but neither gained the upper-hand.

Ian. My Command sections, weapons teams and Demolisher set overwatch. On the left the Tactical squads reached the ruins and the whole battleline opened fire on the advancing Tyranids horde. Once again, our fire failed to inflict any casualties at all! The Tyranids had achieved total annihilation of our psykers so we had nothing to offer in the way of psychic combat and Andy declined to do anything, so on that note the turn ended.

TYRANID TURN 2

Andy: Booby traps! Disaster more like! My glorious phalanx of death was now heading straight into trouble. To compensate, fortune smiled on me and a Tallarn warrior keeled over and seconds later two of his compatriots were ripped apart by the lashing tendrils of the barbed strangler that burst from his body. This was all too much for even the doughty Tallarn troops and they panicked and ran for cover! The tardy Lictor also turned up on the extreme right of the battlefield to assault the Imperial Guard. But this didn't help me with the thorny problem of getting past the heavily trapped refinery.

After some deliberation, I split my forces to avoid the booby trapped area. I left the surviving Lictor and Gargoyles, along with two broods of Termagants, to finish off the Eldar. The rest of my force charged over the (gulp) open ground to the right of the refinery to try and overwhelm the Imperial Guard by weight of numbers. Then, to my joy, a Spore Mine veered into the Wraithguard and detonated in a huge explosion! All of the Wraithguard were knocked flat, one was destroyed, another was damaged and their overwatch was lost. The Carnifexes were too tough to be affected by the traps, so they charged into the refinery and pounced on the crippled Eldar Dreadnought.

To my left, one brood of Termagants charged the War Walker while the Lictor leapt forward to seize a Warp Spider in its deadly embrace. The unengaged Gargoyle flapped forward to attack the Guardian squad with its flamespurt, while remnants of both the Hormagaunt and Termagant broods bounded across the refinery to attack the Imperial Guard Colonel and his Tech Priest. The rest of the horde swept to the right and into Demolisher territory. The overwatching Demolisher blasted apart three Termagants and a Tyranid Warrior as they came over the brow of the hill.

In order to try break up the Imperial Guard defences I brought the high-flying Gargoyles plummeting down to attack their command sections. To my utter horror the overwatching Guardsmen blasted two of the creatures, their morale broke and they fled back up to the sky. Curses, foiled again! As the Command sections' heavy weapons had missed everything, it seemed as if my foes had used up all their good fortune as well.

With grim determination I pressed home my attack on the Command sections with the Biovores. One Spore Mine landed close enough to be a problem next turn, and the other landed squarely between two closely packed

The Tyranid horde sweeps around the refinery towards the ruins where the Imperial Guard lie in wait...

squads further forward in the ruins. Another massive explosion raked the area and fragments of sharp chitin shredded through the helpless Guardsmen inflicting terrible wounds. As the smoke cleared it became apparent that both squads lost over half their number, but despite their terrible losses neither of them would break.

More Guardsmen fell to the corrosive slime of the Tyranid Warriors' deathspitters, which also damaged one of the Eldar Jetbikes shrieking overhead. Another Jetbike was struck by Termagants wielding stranglewebs and its pilot was torn from his saddle. The Hive Tyrant's barbed strangler slew a missile launcher team and almost entangled the Demolisher as well. Another blast like that and time would be up for the Imperial siege tank! The lone Gargoyle assaulted the Eldar Guardians and burned two of them, causing the rest to break and flee!

In the centre, the Carnifex easily scythed through the Dreadnought's legs and the war machine toppled over in an undignified heap. The Lictor carved through its opponent and leapt onto the Warp Spider Exarch whilst the Gargoyle fighting the last Warp Spider fared worse and was killed. The Techpriest fought off the Hormagaunt attacking him but remained locked in combat. The Colonel was completely covered in a mass of sticky strands from a Termagant's strangleweb, but he broke free and was carried from the creature's clutches by his displacer field. The War Walker desperately fought off its attackers and the Guardian controlling it was only saved from death by the meagre protection of his mesh armour. The accursed thing still lived!

The psychic phase was uneventful as *The Horror*, the only psychic power at my disposal, was out of range – I was starting to think I should have spent more points on psychic powers.

ALLIED TURN 3

Adrian: By this stage in the battle my Eldar forces had taken a real pounding, but we weren't out of the fight yet! I still had some devastating weapons in my arsenal and I would do my very best to bring these to bear on the Tyranids.

On the far right, the War Walker brushed off the Termagants and, joined by the Warp Spider, fired their deadly weapons at their assailants. Five Termagants died from this deadly blast of exotic weaponry and the Warp Spider teleported back to the safety of the woods. As the Tyranids began to close on the Eldar lines, the Wraithguard got to their feet and opened fire with their sophisticated wraithcannon. One shot managed to destroy a Genestealer and another displaced the nearest Carnifex back onto the gantry of the refinery! The remaining Jetbikes swept over the Tyranid Warriors and Termagants, strafing the Biovore with lethal shurikens. The Biovore was torn apart but the remaining Spore Mines erupted from within its bowels, right into the path of my oncoming Jetbikes!

Ian: At the start of the turn I suddenly found I had lost most of my infantry to a terrifyingly effective barrage of Spore Mines. The survivors were resolute in their defiance and resolved to sacrifice themselves in the defence of their planet. Having narrowly broken free of suffocating strangleweb attacks, Colonel Gurion pulled a baroque orb from his belt where it had been hidden. Priming the device he flung it with full force towards the Hive Tyrant with the barbed strangler. The tortured sound of reality tearing itself apart split the air as the vortex field blossomed. It consumed the abomination entirely, despite a brief crackle of resistance from the Hive Tyrant's *Warp Field* and *Null Zone*.

The Imperial Guard were showing signs of battle fatigue and only a Tyranid Warrior and a lone Termagant fell to the hail of fire from the Demolisher as the Tyranids broke over the hill. Both the Cadian and Catachan Lieutenants followed the Demolisher's lead and only succeeded in killing another Termagant and one Genestealer. Adrian's Warp Spider Exarch excelled himself by fending of the ferocious attacks of the Lictor, while my Tech-priest was overpowered by a Hormagaunt, but was saved by his trusty armour. In the psychic phase I played *Energy Drain*, ending the turn swiftly.

TYRANID TURN 3

Andy: In a nail-biting start to this turn we rolled to see what would happen to the vortex, but to my relief it moved away from my advancing creatures. The Spore Mines drifted aimlessly for the most part, the one closest to the Command sections floated off the battlefield. However, the Spore Mines which had erupted from the corpse of the Biovore detonated amongst the Jetbikes, the resulting chain reaction inflicting critical damage on the squadron. The Hive Tyrant returned as a reinforcement, as did the Biovore, and both entered the battle near the rocks and chemical pool on my right. The Gargoyles flying high landed near the Hive Tyrant in order to rally.

Outraged by the destruction of the Hive Tyrant the Tyranid horde surged forward once more, leaping over the corpses of their fallen to rend and tear at the defenders. Genestealers and Tyranid Warriors charged the Colonel to exact their bloody revenge, while the Carnifexes attacked the Dire Avengers and the Techpriest – if they weren't going to succumb to terror they'd have to succumb to a claw in the head! More Termagants swarmed forward to break the deadlock between the Exarch and Lictor, and to finally kill off the dratted War Walker. The lone surviving Gargoyle charged the last Warp Spider in an effort to either destroy him or die so that the Gargoyle brood could return. The Hormagaunts leapt on the Wraithguard in an attempt to keep them busy until more Tyranids arrived to finish them off.

In the shooting phase the Hive Tyrants exacted their own vengeance on the Imperial Guard. Both the venom cannon and newly arrived barbed strangler (fired at a run with the assistance of an *Adrenalin Sac*) were deadly accurate and devastated the Mordian Iron Guard and the Command sections, inflicting six casualties on each. The Tyranid Warriors also pounded the Imperial Guard unmercifully, their deathspitters wiping out the remnants of the Catachan Jungle Fighters and the Cadian Command section. On top of all this another Jetbike rider was caught by a Termagant's strangleweb and wrenched to the ground.

In the hand-to-hand combat the Warp Spider contemptuously slew the last Gargoyle, but the Lictor tore apart the Exarch once a Termagant had distracted him. The War Walker trod on the Termagant attacking it yet again – I was starting to get the notion that this was some Exarch amongst War Walkers! The Wraithguard managed to kill a stray Termagant but lost one of their number to the ferocious Hormagaunts. Unsurprisingly, the Carnifexes butchered both of their opponents, despite the Tech-Priest rolling three 6's on his attack dice!

This left the Colonel fighting for his life and Ian made my jaw drop by rolling another three 6's on his attack dice. To add insult to injury, the Tyranid Warrior parried with his Boneswords and Ian proceeded to roll yet another 6! The Tyranid Warrior easily survived the Colonel's riposte but I was starting to wonder what had become of the supreme hand-to-hand combat ability of the Tyranids. I needn't have worried. Flashy swordsmanship couldn't save the Colonel from the two equally deadly Genestealers which had pounced on him. The Imperial officer was swiftly torn limb-from-limb, mostly thanks to his incredibly poor Displacer field saving throws. Again, nothing happened in the psychic phase.

ALLIED TURN 4

Adrian: This turn is going to be one of the most crucial turns of the game. As Andy's Tyranids poured over the hill, I would have to get a good round of shooting in if I was going to stand any chance of stopping them. The turn started with Ian rolling to see what happened to the vortex. Unfortunately, it collapsed in on itself and disappeared. One of my damaged Jetbikes flew off the table and was removed from the game. The other managed to crash into the only patch of open ground for miles, without harming a single Tyranid!

As the last of the Eldar are overrun, the Imperial Guard ready themselves for the final onslaught of the Tyranids.

On my right, the Warp Spider continued to harass the Tyranids' flank, killing another Termagant before warping back to relative safety. Despite only having a Leadership of five, the Termagants passed their break test, proving the influence of the hive mind is not always necessary. The War Walker, seeing the Warp Spider Exarch cut down mercilessly the previous turn, punched a hole through the Lictor's defences, killing it in a blinding flash of light.

The Wraithguard fired upon the remaining Carnifex, in an attempt to either displace it further away or destroy it completely. The beast refused to meet its appointment in the warp and was displaced behind the refinery.

Ian: Having wasted valuable time going around my booby traps, it was now becoming clear that Andy was going to bring on every new reinforcement opposite my Imperial Guard. The only answer to this was to begin my tactical withdrawal in the hope of putting as much distance and solid cover between my troops and the oncoming Tyranids.

The Demolisher siege tank, praise the Emperor for this wonderful creation, would be a difficult challenge for the Tyranids. I concentrated its entire arsenal on the rapidly approaching Genestealers, Termagants and Tyranid Warriors. Andy's shrewd dispersal of his forces meant I only managed to blast three Genestealers and a lone Termagant. In an attempt to add extra weight to the Demolisher's firing, the Catachan Command section's missile launcher drew a bead on a Tyranid Warrior. A krak missile should end plans to dominate the galaxy for that particular Tyranid! However, I was to be horribly disappointed as I rolled a HIT and MISFIRE. The weapon erupted in a ball of flame, blowing the Guardsman to pieces. Seeing their comrade die, the Command section's nerve broke and they fled back behind the ruins!

In the hand-to-hand combat phase, Andy's Carnifex continued to vent his anger on the Dire Avengers, ripping one to pieces. The single Wraithguard and Hormagaunt fought with claw and fist, but neither could gain the upper hand. Andy took control, playing *The Horror*, causing the Wraithguard to take a break test. Adrian rolled an eleven and I watched in horror as the Wraithguard, the only thing left standing between my Demolisher and the Carnifexes, ran back towards the Tallarn Desert Raiders cowering in the rocks.

I needed to get support for my Demolisher rapidly. So in the rally phase I played the *Insane Courage* Strategy card on the Tallarn Desert Raiders. The Guardsmen recovered their wits and resumed their position to the right of the Demolisher. This also allowed them to immediately open fire on the nearby Hormagaunts and Tyranid Warriors. The lasgun shots went wide of the fast-moving Hormagaunts, but a Tyranid Warrior fell to the blaze of autocannon rounds.

TYRANID TURN 4

Andy: As we passed the halfway stage, I was starting to get worried about finishing off the Eldar and destroying the Demolisher in time. However, the broken Wraithguard made this much easier as the Carnifexes might actually be able to reach the Demolisher and destroy it in hand-to-hand combat. This turn heralded the arrival of three broods of Termagants and a brood of Gargoyles. Sadly the Lictor chose not to turn up again, on another roll of one. What was it with these Lictors? I dispatched one brood of Termagants towards the Eldar and the other two towards the Imperial Guard.

The Termagants charged the War Walker with a distinct feeling of déjà vu and the recently rallied Gargoyles swept down on the remaining Dire Avengers. In the centre, the Carnifexes charged off towards the Demolisher with their massive claws snapping. The surviving Tyranid Warrior with boneswords moved towards the Eldar to extend the control of the hive mind back into that corner of the battlefield. Meanwhile, the Hormagaunts bounded into the midst of the Tallarn Desert Raiders, determined to give them no respite. The rest of the swarm closed on the surviving remnants of the Imperial Guard though whether they would arrive in time was still in the balance. I was pinning a lot of my hopes on the Lictor which was stalking ever closer through the rock spires.

I concentrated my attentions on the Demolisher in the hopes of at least damaging it and reducing its firepower. The Hive Tyrant with the venom cannon missed embarrassingly but the Biovores came good again by dropping two Spore Mines right on top of it. The shower of corrosive fluids damaged the Demolisher's tracks and one of its sponsons, plus they would now continue to burn through the tank. A gout of fire from the Gargoyles finally brought down the last Eldar Jetbike but the rest of my firing was disappointing – the weakened Tyranid Warrior broods failed to hit the Tallarn squad and the other Hive Tyrant's barbed strangler failed to wound them!

Hand-to-hand combat brought mixed blessings. The Hormagaunts slashed through the Desert Raiders with such startling ferocity that the sons of Tallarn broke once more and fled from the table! The Gargoyles battling the Dire Avengers slew one of them and lost one of their own number, while the three Termagants attacking the War Walker beat it thoroughly but failed to injure its pilot. Adrian's triumphant chuckles were drowned out by the thud-thud-thud of my head banging against the wall. Who would rid me of this upstart War Walker?

Once again the psychic phase was silent save for the susurrant roar of the hive mind.

ALLIED TURN 5

Adrian: Things were looking grim for the allies. With the Tyranid Carnifexes sweeping around the rear of the Imperial Guard lines, the Wraithguard were forced to flee off the table. Once again the War Walker pilot brushed off the Termagants that were hell-bent on destroying him, killing one with its scatter laser. The Termagants tried to establish contact with the comforting might of the hive mind but couldn't, and they fled into the refinery.

Ian: The Demolisher turned its attention to the rapidly closing Carnifexes. With the Wraithguard gone, they were a very real threat. However, the sight of these terrifying monsters must have severely hampered the gunners aim as nearly all the shots went wildly off target. The only exception was the Demolisher cannon itself, but its low saving throw modifier meant that the Carnifex easily shrugged of the impact of the awesome shell. The Gargoyle brood swept around the Dire Avengers, killing one of them. The Dire Avengers kept their cool and stood firm despite their heavy losses. With the warp flux low Andy could not play any psychic powers.

A wave of Tyranid reinforcements pours onto the battlefield, led by a third Hive Tyrant!

TYRANID TURN 5

The Lictor put in an appearance this turn, amidst the woods on my left to assist in hunting down the last Warp Spider if he decided to get tricky. The corrosives eating through the Demolisher proved to be rather weak and failed to cause significant harm but I expected the Carnifexes would rip it apart this turn. Indeed, one of the mighty bio-monsters was in charge range and slammed into the side of the Demolisher like an express train. The Tyranid Warrior with boneswords charged into the last two Dire Avengers and the Gargoyles in the centre flapped up into the skies. Next turn they could swoop down and burn out any last pockets of resistance. The rest of the Tyranids raced to attack the Mordian Iron Guard and the Commissar still holding out in the ruins, instinctively avoiding the Demolisher and its doubtless huge armoury of anti-personnel devices. The Lictor stalked to the tumbled walls at the edge of the ruins just as the Hormagaunts closed in on the opposite side. There would be no escape!

I launched Spore Mines in a rather hopeless fashion at the Warp Spider, hoping that they would limit his movement even if they did not detonate – both were nowhere near. The Mordians fared worse though, as deathspitters slew two of them and a barbed strangler pod ripped apart another. The Lictor launched its flesh hooks at the surviving Mordian and the nearby Commissar. The Guardsman's body was torn in two by the razor-edged hooks, but the Commissar survived and was dragged towards the mantis-clawed Lictor.

In the hand-to-hand combats the Gargoyles and the Tyranid Warrior slaughtered the last two Dire Avengers and moved into cover closer to the War Walker. The Carnifex was lashed by the Demolisher's frag defender rounds and crackling *Electro-Hull* but, having survived a hit from the Demolisher cannon, it was not so easily put off. The scythe-armed giant tore through the immobilised tank's hull in an almost leisurely fashion, eventually igniting its fuel tanks and incinerating its last crew members.

With the Demolisher burning and the Mordians dead, Ian was left with only the doomed Commissar but Adrian still had his blasted Warp Spider and the thrice-accursed War Walker. I would do my utmost to test the War Walker's apparent invulnerability next turn…

ALLIED TURN 6

Ian: Time had run out. After the Catachan Command section were forced to flee the table all that remained of my force was the lone Commissar who set overwatch, ready to face the Lictor. Adrian's War Walker brushed off its attackers and desperately blasted the Tyranid Warrior threatening him, to no avail. The Warp Spider warped into the cover of the woods. Once again nothing happened in the psychic phase.

TYRANID TURN 6

Andy: The time had come for a final reckoning! The Lictor and Hormagaunts pounced on the Commissar in the ruins. The Commissar's overwatch shot struck the Lictor squarely but failed to even wound it. The War Walker was swamped by Termagants and Gargoyles, led this time by a Tyranid Warrior. The Gargoyles wheeling high above the battlefield spiralled down to surround the woods where the Warp Spider was lurking. A brood of Termagants moved into position to riddle the Warp Spider with fleshborer beetles if he was driven into the open by the Gargoyle's flamespurts. Likewise, the Lictor amidst the woods prepared his bio-plasma in case it was needed. The rest of the Tyranids stormed onward!

The Gargoyles turned the Warp Spider's hiding place into a veritable inferno and he finally succumbed to the roaring flames The Commissar fought back viciously in hand-to-hand combat, hatred burning in his veins as he beat off the two Hormagaunts with wild sweeps of his chainsword. But the jagged claws of the Lictor swept down on him with an air of grim finality and, well the rest is just too horrible to describe…

The War Walker stood alone with a tide of horror whirling about its legs. The Guardian pilot looked around desperately for help or something he could use to gain an edge. There was nothing. The giant form of a Tyranid Warrior strode through the horde and thrust upward, skewering the Guardian on its bonesword like some obscene sweetmeat. The war machine's luck had finally run out and victory was mine!

FEEDING TIME

Andy: Too close for comfort! By the end of the third turn I was having serious doubts about whether victory was still possible. The game served as a reminder that Tyranids have to maintain the momentum of their attack at all costs, especially in a *Tyranid Attack* where casualties are irrelevant to victory. Fortunately, I did manage to keep my attack going on a narrow front and break through the enemy forces, but it proved far tougher than I had imagined. The serious problems started with Ian playing his *Booby Traps* Strategy card in the refinery. This meant anything other than a Carnifex was liable to be blown to smithereens if it continued along its pre-planned route.

This left me with a painful decision. I could sweep left into the remnants of the Eldar, moving that way would also have taken me far away from the virtually intact Imperial Guard which I knew would still take a lot of energy to eliminate. Moving to the right around the refinery would take me into an area of open ground swept by the guns of the Wraithguard, the Demolisher tank and numerous Imperial heavy weapons teams. In the event I went to the right, suffered some horrendous casualties and nearly failed to eliminate the Eldar altogether. With hindsight I think I made the correct decision because it did take a lot of force to overwhelm the enemies' guns. However, in moving the axis of my attack I made a very foolish mistake in not sending some Tyranid Warriors to keep the Termagants and Gargoyles on the left hand side under the influence of the Hive Mind. The small brood sizes of these creatures along with their poor leadership meant that they were beaten off several times by the remnants of the Eldar before I finally sent over a Tyranid Warrior to control them. In essence my anxiety about attacking the Imperial Guard made me draw off more troops than I needed that way, making my mopping up of the Eldar rather weak and half-hearted.

Another example of this kind of foolishness was the Gargoyles dropping on the Imperial Guard's command post in the ruins. Having lost two models to overwatch fire, without the guiding light of the Hive Mind, the Gargoyles promptly fled. Playing with Tyranids for a while can make you take it for granted that you don't have to take Break tests, so you end up pulling stupid stunts with grim consequences – in this case the Gargoyles being broken for no gain.

Another thing which continually surprised me was that my close combat dice rolls were rather mediocre. Fortunately, Tyranids are so outrageous in close combat that a few weird dice rolls will seldom save their opponents!

To compensate for the close combats I had some truly memorable shooting against the Imperial Guard clustered in the ruins. The Spore Mines inflicted horrendous

damage of course, but the Tyranid Warriors also did really well there, proving that even humble deathspitters have a lot going for them. The Carnifexes were instrumental in my victory, charging forward across the battlefield while wraithcannon hits, lascannon shots, maximal plasma bolts and even a Demolisher shell ricocheted off their carapaces! These rampaging monsters proved to be essential for cracking the armour of the Demolisher, not to mention finishing off the Eldar Dreadnought and terrorising several other squads.

The Hive Tyrants with their psychic powers and heavy weaponry were also very welcome, especially with their *Psychic Scream* powers. The psychological blow of losing an important character like Eldrad Ulthran in the first turn is devastating and through the harsh turns to come I was comforted at the thought that Adrian's ability to roll 5's and 6's all the time had brought about Eldrad's demise! The Hive Tyrants also destroyed Ian's Adeptus Psyker and routed the Wraithguard with *The Horror*.

Turning to the other side of the table I must say that Adrian and Ian put up a stalwart defence. The positioning of the Wraithguard and Demolisher behind the hill made it almost impossible to advance that way because the Wraithguard could take out large targets while the Demolisher vapourised anything smaller. I thought that the Jetbikes were a little wasted and could have been used to support the Wraithguard by making pop-up attacks – as soon as they moved forward I knew that they would be destroyed sooner rather than later. Ian definitely had the right idea in setting up a powerful strongpoint in an area with lots of open lines of fire and then parking a huge tank next to it. Thankfully Spore Mines are ideal for breaking up that kind of defence. Overall I can say I was more than happy with the performance of the whole Tyranid army – everything scuttled, crawled or flew in the right direction and scared the willies out of the defenders!

DEVOURED!

Ian: Wow! Are they tough, or are they tough! Three sixes in close combat and my Tech-Priest still died! Overall I'm rather pleased how the game went and if I was granted a chance to play it again, I wouldn't change my strategy much.My main mistake was failing to achieve the correct balance between tanks and infantry. I should have gone for more tanks, even if it was only Chimeras (only Chimeras!). At least they could have protected an infantry squad, not to mention the fact that each one carries some serious firepower in the form of the multi-laser. Of course, having more tanks would have meant losing some infantry.However, I think a reduced infantry force would have survived just as long as my massed block did.

The majority of my Guardsmen were killed by extremely effective blast marker weapons like the barbed stranglers and exploding Spore Mines. By having less Tactical squads they would have been able to spread out more, not only the models

within individual squads, but also the distance between each of the squads.These measures would have reduced the losses inflicted by such weapons such as the barbed strangler. Another factor that would have been introduced if I had a few more armoured vehicles is would the infantry have been shot at in the first place? With so many hard targets Andy may have been pressured into targeting most of his firepower against them, in a desperate attempt to get that lucky penetrating shot. I also know that in future I probably won't take any psykers at all. I know this sounds like fairly drastic action, but the Tyranids are renowned for their ability to completely obliterate all psychic activity around them. Psykers are extremely expensive, and as we saw in the battle, even mighty warriors like Eldrad Ulthran can succumb to the Tyranids' mind-shattering powers. The points saved on the psyker could then be put to good use buying a Leman Russ battle tank, providing the Tyranids with more problems than an expensive psyker.

The battle was a very close run thing. It was only in the last few turns it started to become obvious that we were going to suffer the worst for our mistakes. All in all a very enjoyable battle, with some very important lessons learnt.

Adrian: I don't believe it! I've never rolled so many sixes in close combat in my life! The one area I didn't expect to do well was close combat and the Eldar did better in hand-to-hand than in shooting! As Andy's horde struggled to reach the Imperial Guard under a hail of fire from the sterling Demolisher, the Eldar proved themselves to be an elusive and worrying thorn in the Tyranids' side.

In general, the Eldar forces had mixed success. The fall of Eldrad Ulthran to the *Psychic Scream* totally blew any idea of dominating the psychic phase. Next time, I'll take an Avatar as my army commander! The Jetbikes flew into the jaws of death, only to make a great success of not hitting the Tyranid Warriors they were meant to eliminate. It has to be said that the War Walker pilot should have been a corpse on the second turn, but he was a determined soul and managed to fight off an ever-increasing number of combatants, beyond my wildest expectations. The Warp Spider was my trump card as I knew he would be very difficult to catch on the last turn. Even so, as it turned out there was little I could do to stop the Gargoyles from rallying and hunting down the poor Aspect Warrior.

WARHAMMER 40,000

Redemption

By
Steve Anastasoff
and
Gavin Thorpe

This month's battle report chronicles a clash between the grim Space Marines of the Dark Angels Chapter and a frothing horde of Orks.

ANGELS OF DEATH

Gav: Over the last few issues we've been fighting some very different types of games, like the ones featured in the Warhammer *Raid!* campaign and the Epic *Breakthrough* battle report. Each of these presented new scenarios or other alternative ways of fighting your battles and was an interesting variation to test your generalship.

With the recent release of Codex Angels of Death, we thought we'd go back to basics and fight a more normal battle. This would allow us to test the mettle of the Dark Angels against their old enemies, the Orks, without having to remember special scenario rules or victory conditions.

We fought the battle on one of our 8' x 4' tables (which Owen showed you how to build last month!) and took notes and snapshots during play. As you can see in the photo above the table is rather messy, so after the battle we recreated the most exciting parts of the battle and took the finished photos you see on the following pages.

Carefully ducking underneath the caption, Gav checks his line of sight for a devastating salvo of fire!

In the dim light of the auditorium, the cloaked figures of the Grand Masters could be seen only occasionally. The air was filled with swirling dust, drifting through the pools of light cast by the few ancient lamps which hung from the lofty ceiling. Azrael stepped up to the lectern, his huge frame silhouetted against an ornate window depicting the triumphs of Lion 'El Johnson. Outside, through other equally ornate windows, the nearby star grew ever closer as The Rock's huge engines forced the monolithic edifice through the ether of space. The deep red star bathed the monastery in a ruddy glow that created more shadows than light.

Azrael activated the holo-vid behind him and a diagram of the star system appeared, slowly revolving around its Red Dwarf star. The Supreme Grand Master's deep voice echoed across the vast chamber, as he turned his piercing gaze on the assembled Dark Angels.

"This is Arad, recently re-discovered. We are here for three reasons. Firstly, it is dominated by foul Ork warlords, keeping the human population bound in slavery, building their crude weapons. We have been commanded by the Emperor to free these people and return them to his light. Secondly, the Adeptus Mechanicus believes that Arad may be home to a partially functioning STC database, the discovery of which will bring great benefits to humanity. Our mission is to assure ourselves of its existence and protect it while the Adeptus Mechanicus despatch an armed research team to discover what can be salvaged."

Azrael paused and studied the assembled Inner Circle. He stabbed at another rune on the lectern and the holo-vid changed to a diagram of a ruined Imperial settlement. A flashing red rune indicated a spot roughly in the centre of a ruined outpost. Green arrows surrounded the area, showing the presence of the Ork encampments and a nearby cluster of crude buildings of Ork design. Azrael walked around the wire-frame representation, appearing to study the layout of their objective. He stooped down to stare into the depths of the holo-vid, seeing in his mind's eye the curves of the earth, the shape of the ruins as they were on the planet's surface. The Supreme Grand Master came out of his reverie and returned to stand behind the lectern. His voice grew graver and a shadow seemed to pass across his face.

"Lastly, and most importantly, I strongly believe that a certain outpost on the planet was once occupied by some of the Fallen. We must secure the ruins of the outpost and scour it for all the data we can. As you well know, any scrap of evidence that the Fallen existed here for a time will strengthen our Crusade. Arad will be purged of the Orkish scum – they will fall beneath our sacred blades and we will discover the truth of this outpost's history. The Ravenwing will be dispatched as soon as we enter orbit, and a full drop will commence once they locate a secure landing point. Assemble your companies, we go to war!"

The Grand Masters bowed their heads in acquiescence and filed out, chanting the Catechism of Vigilance as they prepared to face their enemies. Only Grand Master Sapphon remained, held in place by a look from his commander.

"Prepare your Interrogator-Chaplains Sapphon, if all goes well, we may be one step closer to redemption..."

Although I'd fought with Orks a couple of times before, I'm not the most experienced greenskin commander. So, being surrounded here by some of the most experienced generals in the country, I decided to seek out some sagely advice.

My first stop was that renowned Ork Warboss, Adrian Wood. ***"Just shoot anything that's not green..."*** *Hmmm. While this may well be a sensible plan for the majority of skirmishes, I felt that somehow this wasn't exactly the advice I was looking for, especially as I would be fighting the Dark Angels, the greenest of all Space Marines. My next stop was famed tank commander Ian Pickstock.* ***"Well, how many Leman Russ have you got?"*** *After I explained that Orks were not inclined to using squadrons of armoured vehicles, Ian snorted in disgust and stomped off to admire the new Imperial Guard Basilisk.*

Next on my list was Gavin Thorpe. It sounded like ***"You're all going to die, greenskin scum!"*** *but it was difficult to make out his exact words through his fits of evil laughter. Perhaps, in hindsight, it was not a good idea asking my opponent for advice. Last of all was the master strategist himself, the wily Jake Thornton.* ***"Just hit 'em hard and hit 'em fast."*** *Well, it had something of a ring to it. Yes, hit 'em hard and hit 'em fast, that would become my battlefield motto. I would choose my army in two highly specialised sections: a hitting 'em hard part, and a hitting 'em fast part. These could then work together on the battlefield, complementing each other whatever combination of missions Gavin and I drew.*

"Well, how many Leman Russ have you got?"

HIT 'EM HARD

Steve: The Hitting 'em Hard part of my army was to sit at the back of the table and pound the Dark Angels with long range firepower. I started off by taking an artillery battery with a Pulsa Rokkit, Smasha Gun, Splatta Kannon and Traktor Cannon. Ork artillery is notoriously unreliable, but by taking lots of it, I hoped to put the odds in my favour – at least one of my artillery pieces should work well and do some serious damage. My next choice was a mob of Deathskulls, equipped with kustom kombi-weapons. Again, while these may individually be highly unreliable, having five of them in the mob would mean that at least one or two should work well each turn.

The third element in this section would be a Mekaniak called Spikee armed with a Shokk Attack Gun. This is potentially one of the most devastating weapons in the Ork arsenal, especially against Terminators and Dreadnoughts, both of which Gav was likely to field. Next, I added a Dreadnought with a lascannon, so that I would have at least one weapon that I could rely on not to misfire! The final elements in the Hitting 'em Hard section were a Weirdboy Warphead, and a unit of Gretchin to shield everyone else from the Dark Angels' return fire.

HIT 'EM FAST

I had already used up a good deal of my points, without even a Warboss, so I decided to make this section of the army slightly smaller than the other. First choice here was an Evil Sunz mob mounted on Warbikes. Not only are their twin autocannons extremely effective, but the 'Eavy metal team has been painting up a whole unit of them, and they looked so good that I couldn't resist. I then added a mob of Snakebite Boyz mounted on boars to complete the Hitting 'em Fast part of the army.

I still hadn't taken a Warboss, so that definitely had to be my next choice. I kitted him out with a *Kustom Shoota* and a power fist, and I called him Noshrok – a good, solid name for an Ork. I also needed a Runtherd and Painboy in order to take all the goodies I had already chosen. Finally I decided on a Bad Moons Nobz mob wearing Ork mega-armour to act as a personal bodyguard for my Warboss.

DA KUNNIN' PLAN

I drew the *Engage and Destroy* mission, while Gav got *Take and Hold*. The extra victory points that I would gain simply from destroying Gav's troops (which I'd do anyway) would mean that he would almost certainly have to complete his mission in order to win. Even if I ended up taking heavy casualties myself, I would need to keep Gav away from his objective. So, with everything now ready it was time to come up with a Kunnin' Plan and deploy Da Boyz ready for battle.

The large Ork building in the centre of the table offered excellent lines of sight across the battlefield (and especially over Gav's objective) so this would become the focus for my deployment. The Deathskulls and Zagwort the Warphead were positioned on its higher rooftops, ready to rain fire on any troops that reached the objective, while the Gretchin were placed below them as a screen. They would also be able to run out and surround Gav's objective, preventing the Dark Angels from capturing it. The Dreadnought was then positioned to the left of the building, with the artillery to the right. Hopefully anything approaching the objective would be caught in a crossfire between these two.

On my far left, I placed the Evil Sunz and Snakebites, ready to zoom out behind the cover of the ruins and attack the Space Marines in the flank. Finally, the Nobz mob were deployed forward on the right flank using my *Forced March* Strategy card, with Skabskrag the Painboy and Noshrok close behind. These would move in on Gav's objective, and sit on it. Hopefully, their mega-armour would be sufficiently resilient to keep them alive until the end of the battle, when the objective would be mine! Spikee and Grotsnot the Runtherd were *Delayed* by one of Gav's Strategy cards, and so the Shokk Attack Gun would be unable to deploy until my first turn.

WAAAGH! NOSHROK (1500 points)

WARBOSS
'Eavy armour, power fist and *Kustom Shoota.*

WEIRDBOY WARPHEAD
Accompanied by four Minderz armed with bolt pistols and flak armour.

MEKANIAK
Flak armour and carrying a Shokk Attack Gun.

RUNTHERD
Bolt pistol and flak armour.

PAINBOY
Bolt pistol, flak armour *Cybork Body* and *Doc's Tools.*

BAD MOON NOBZ
Three Nobz in Ork Mega-armour with power fists, bolters and frag and krak stikkbombz.

DEATHSKULL LOOTAS
Five Boyz with kustom kombi-weapons.

GRETCHIN MOB
Eighteen Gretchin with autoguns or autopistols and knives.

DREADNOUGHT
Lascannon, heavy bolter and two power claws.

DA BIG GUNZ
Pulsa Rokkit

Smasha Gun

Splatta Kannon

Traktor Kannon.

EVIL SUNZ MOB
Five Evil Sunz Boyz riding Warbikes.

SNAKEBITE MOB
Five Snakebite Boyz mounted on boars with axes or chainswords and bolt pistols

The mob is led by a Nob mounted on a Cyboar and carrying a chainsword, bolt pistol and frag stikkbombz.

SNOTLINGS
Six Snotling bases to accompany the Mekaniak with the Shokk Attack Gun.

"I'm gonna win this time.

Honest... "

SMALL BUT PERFECTLY FORMED

Gav: I know we always say this, but when Jake asked who wanted to command the Dark Angels in a battle report, I really did jump at the chance! I really like the new Dark Angels army, mainly because of their shadowy background, but also because they look so cool. Their dark green armour and their long flowing cloaks makes them look, well, really hard! At first I was going to play against Adrian with his trusty Orks, but Jake, kind soul that he is, thought he would let Steve have another chance of glory (or shame…).

1500 points doesn't buy you a whole lot of Space Marines, and you can spend hours agonising over what to take, shifting a few points here to get that Dreadnought, a few points there to get a heavy weapon for your tactical squad. In the end, you just have to take what you really want, and then form a plan around that…

So I took what I wanted, well as much as I could (no Ezekiel!). Of course, I had to take Azrael, Supreme Grand Master of the Dark Angels, Keeper of the Keys. He's just so hard! His *Lion Helm* throws a force field around the bearer, giving troops within 3" an unmodified 4+ save. I would need a psyker, and once Ezekiel had been ruled out, took the next best thing, an Epistolary with a few appropriate bits of wargear. I knew a Dreadnought or some sort of vehicle would be included in my army, so I needed a Techmarine. I managed to keep him down to fifty points – he wouldn't be worth any victory points if killed (I know it's sneaky, but I need all the advantages I can get).

I thought a Tactical squad would be flexible enough to deal with any tricky ploys the Orks tried. It had been a real toss up next, between an Assault, Devastator or Deathwing squad. In the end, I came up with a plan – if I took Brother Bethor, bearer of the Sacred Standard, with the *Standard of Fortitude*, I could keep him near my Terminators. This would mean they could still make a normal move and rapid fire with their storm bolters! A hail of death indeed (and probably a hail of jams, but that's life).

This left me with a woeful lack of heavy weapons (a single lascannon for the Tactical squad and the short ranged heavy flamer carried by the Deathwing Terminators). If Steve was to take a Dreadnought I'd be in a bit of a pickle – unless I took my own Dreadnought! Yes, a missile launcher unleashing salvoes of frag rounds should see to the inevitable Gretchin screen, while twin linked lascannon would deal with anything big and scary enough to worry my Deathwing Terminators. With a few pieces of wargear for the characters, this used up the 1500 points in short order. Oh well, at least it wouldn't take me long to get the army out of the cabinet!

We set up the table and drew missions. Steve's was straightforward enough, *Engage and Destroy*. Mine, though, was a little more tricky. I had been assigned *Take and Hold* and would have to capture the objective marked on the map. Well, I had the ideal troops for the job – the famous and rightly feared Deathwing. My Deathwing Terminators would be supported by Brother Bethor, my Epistolary (Brother Zamiel) and Azrael with his *Lion Helm* (My Deathwing Terminators would be almost invincible!). Brother Zamiel had picked up the Librarian psychic power *Strength of Mind*, which would protect him and anybody within 6" from the inevitable Weirdboy psychic attacks they would face. With this attack force assembled, it would

DARK ANGELS (1500 points)

COMMANDER AZRAEL
Power armour, bolt pistol, *The Lion Helm, Sword of Secrets* and *Combi-weapon.*

EPISTOLARY
Power armour, bolt pistol, *Psychic Hood* and *Force Sword.*

BROTHER BETHOR
Power armour, bolt pistol and *Standard of Fortitude.*

TECHMARINE
Power armour, bolt pistol, power axe and *Servo Arm.*

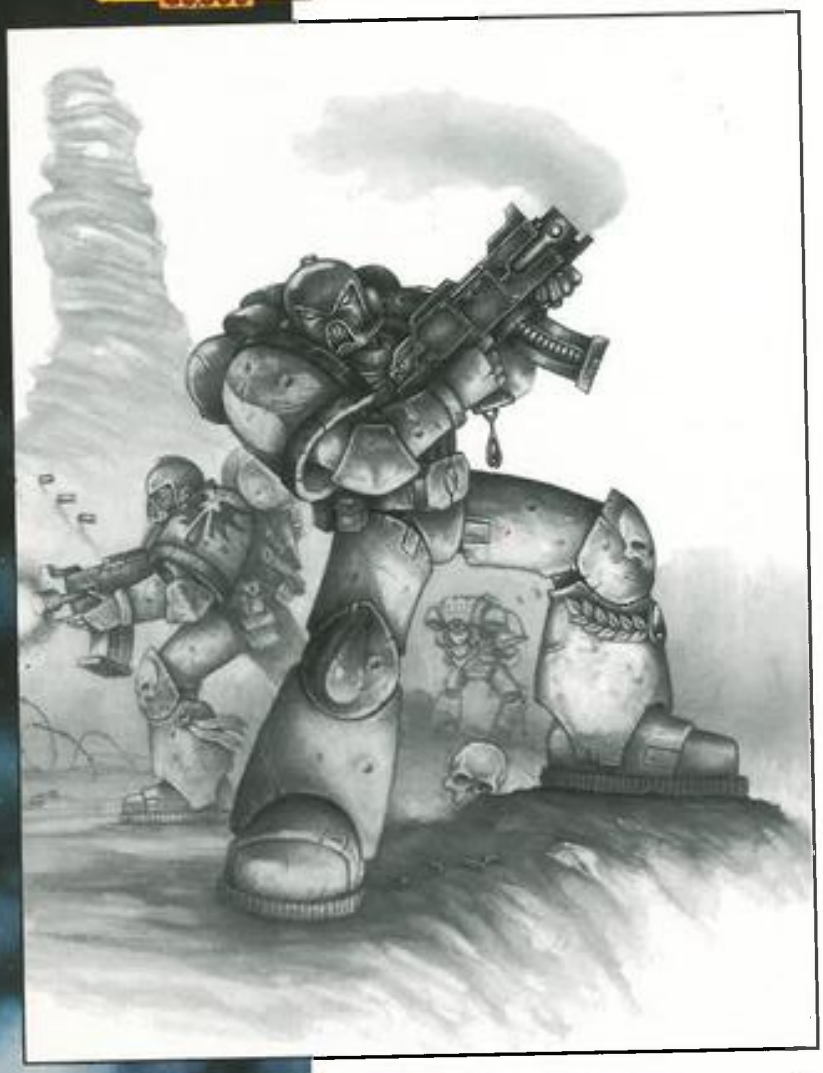
TACTICAL SQUAD APOLLYON
5 Space Marines with power armour and bolters. Veteran Sergeant carries a power sword, one trooper armed with a plasma gun.

TACTICAL SQUAD BELIAL
5 Space Marines with power armour, bolters and one trooper armed with a Lascannon.

DEATHWING SQUAD
5 Space Marines wearing Terminator armour, armed with storm bolters and one heavy flamer.

DREADNOUGHT
Twin-linked lascannon, missile launcher and auto-launchers with blind grenades.

TAKE AND HOLD OBJECTIVE



be up to my Tactical squad and Dreadnought to ensure they reach the objective unmolested.

Steve played his *Forced March* Strategy card on his Nobz in mega-armour, allowing them to deploy further onto the battlefield. Unsurprisingly, they set up quite close to my objective. I then played *Delayed* on the Ork Mekboy with his Shokk Attack Gun. That ingenious invention would make a mockery of the Deathwing's Terminator armour and the plasteel-plated sides of the Dreadnought. One good hit could destroy either of these targets with ease – a terrifying prospect. Fortunately, the Mekboy cannot move and fire with this weapon. This means that by forcing him to move on from the table edge in his first turn (with *Delayed*), I would stop him firing for a turn and would be sure of getting at least one chance to eliminate him first.

Orks are allowed to double their strategy rating to determine who gets the first turn (taking it up to 6, the same as Azrael's). This meant that I had to trust to the luck of the dice. Although I would actually prefer to go second (in *Take and Hold*, having the final turn gives you a last gasp to complete your mission) I would have to deploy in as much cover as possible. For the Deathwing, this meant putting as many ruins as possible between the squad and the Ork artillery on Steve's right flank. My characters used the Terminators as a shield, while the Tactical squads deployed in whatever hard cover was available. With the Shokk Attack Gun out of the way for the moment, there really wasn't anything that could seriously threaten my Dreadnought, so I set up the towering war machine where it could target the Warbikes should I get the first turn.

The jet black Land Speeders roared over the jungle, swooping low to use the trees as cover and quickly overtaking the rest of the bike-mounted Ravenwing. High above, a distant shadow hung in front of Arad's yellow moon, a single large blot caused by the Dark Angels' orbiting fortress monastery. As the sound of the Land Speeders faded away, Space Marine squads began to report in over the comm-net, but the whine of more approaching engines soon drowned this out again. Then, with a boom, a Thunderhawk Gunship soared overhead, carrying Azrael and his attack force towards the distant outpost...

Noshrok stood atop the watchtower of his stronghold watching the distant approach of the Thunderhawk, while below him the Cybork body of Skabskrag occasionally let off a hiss of steam through a valve, or cracked as his engines cooled down.

"Dey's inna bit of an 'urry ain't dey! Mus' be sum loot dat we missed. Gavver Da Boyz togevver an' I'll warm up me shoota. An get Gizzit to round up as many of 'is ladz as 'e can. We'ze gonna give dem new gitz a taste of bolta and boot levver, ain't dat right?"

The Warboss leant over and glowered down at the Painboy.

"Er... course we are boss, ya nevver lose. 'Cept wen Skagga cheated ya at cards, an' you lost ya buggy in a race wiv Gorbladda, an' dere woz dat time wen Gazzra took ya 'air Squig an' den beat yooze up wen yooze tried to gerrit back But apart from dose times, an' sum uvvers, yooze never lose!"

"Dis is mutiny!" Fumed Noshrok, "I'll 'ave ya skinned."

"Nah, dis ain't mutiny boss. Wen I sneaks up on ya an' shootz ya in da 'ed, dat's mutiny, innit?"

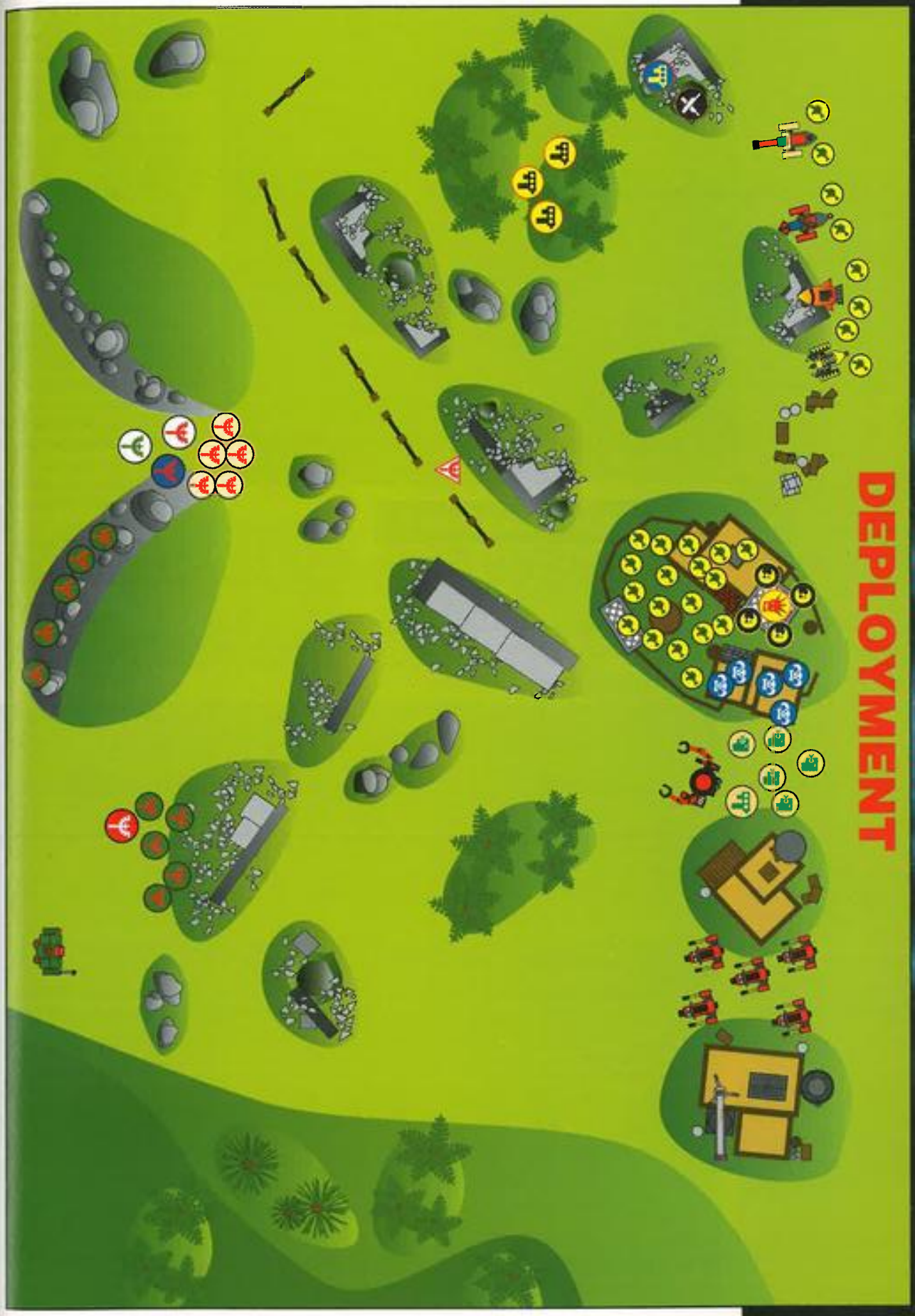
"Oh. Good... Well, now dat's sorted. Get ya bolta, I'm gonna talk ta da ladz."

As Noshrok clambered down from his watchtower, Skabskrag dived into his serjury. He started frantically searching through his chest of odds and ends, throwing things onto the floor in his hurry. Then he found what he wanted. Taking a cautious look around to make sure nobody was watching, he opened the Imperial manual he'd found. With his tongue poking out, and following the words with a grubby finger, he began to read what was on the same page as the picture he'd recognised. The human language was silly, but he'd learnt it off a slave when he had found the ancient tome. Occasionally he had to read a word out loud, just to be sure.

"Funda Ork... Zoggin 'eck... Space Marines... Space Marines? Black bikes... Ravenwing... Er... Dark Angels..."

He flicked a few pages back.

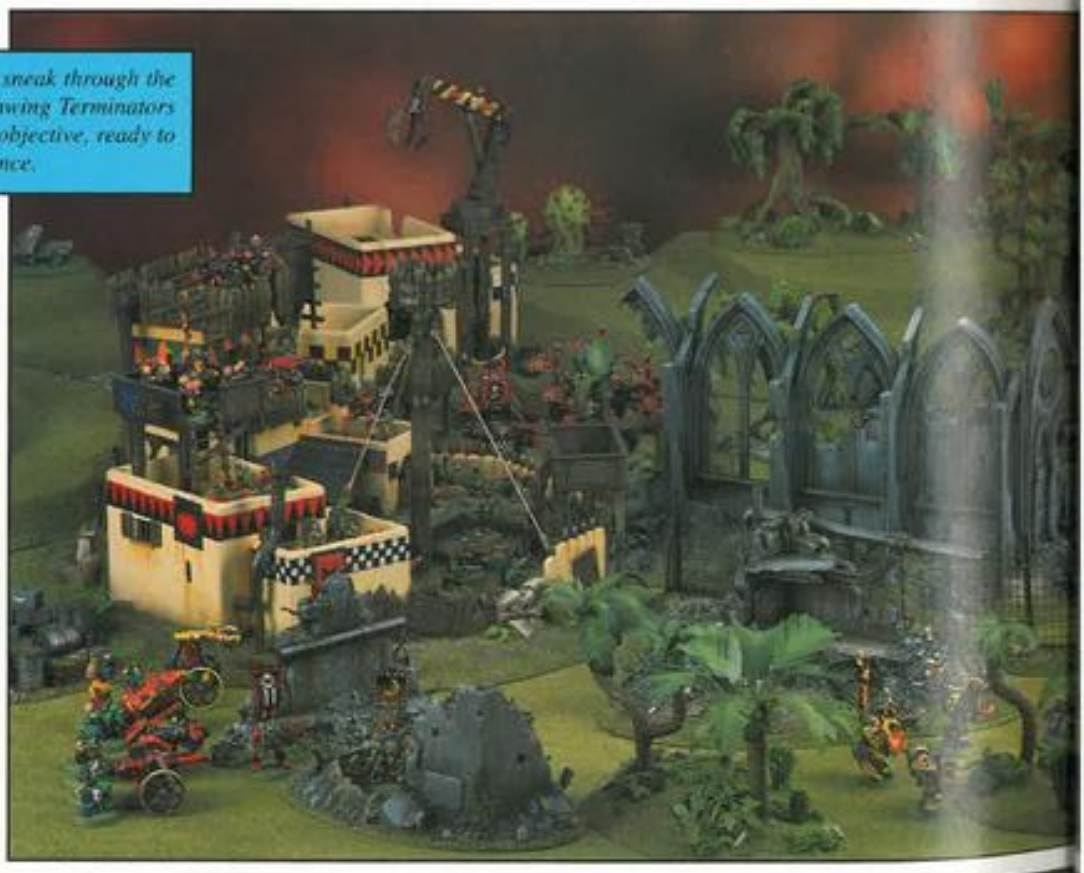
"Deffwing... Err... ZOGGIN ECK! Boss! Boss!"


DEPLOYMENT

DARK ANGELS TURN 1

Gav: I won the roll for the first turn (a mixed blessing) and it was time for the Deathwing to start their advance. With massive servos whining in their hulking Tactical Dreadnought armour, the Deathwing moved forwards in front of my characters. To my right, Squad Apollyon moved forward into the ruins, preparing to rapid fire at the Boarboyz or Warbikes in my next turn should they be foolish to confront my magnificent Dark Angels head on! Squad Belial stayed where they were, a second line of defence should the Orks break through Squad Apollyon.

The first shots of the battle were fired by the Dreadnought, Brother Asteroth. The ancient Space Marine's twin lascannon blazed, lancing into the body of the closest Warbike. However, the expected explosion never came, I had rolled a double 3 on the damage chart, indicating that the autocannons were destroyed and the controls damaged. In subsequent turns the Warbike would move out of control unless Steve could roll a 4+ on a D6. This would undoubtedly cause havoc amongst the closely-packed bikes, so perhaps this wasn't so bad after all. Brother Asteroth vented his fury by unleashing a salvo of frag missiles at the cluster of Ork war machines, hoping to kill their riders if not actually damage the Warbikes.



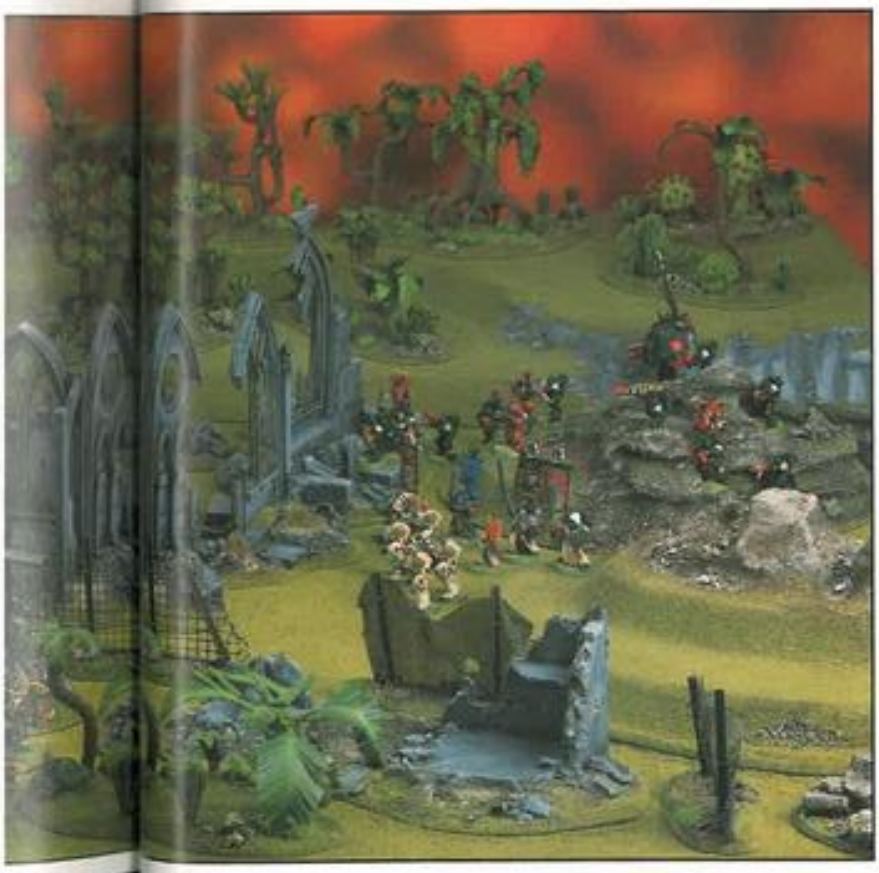
As the Ork Nobz sneak through the woods, the Deathwing Terminators close in on their objective, ready to crush any resistance.

Two explosions erupted amongst the Evil Sunz, but the only thing damaged was the ground – the Warbikes and riders all came through unscathed!

The Deathwing, under the influence of the *Standard of Fortitude*, unleashed a hail of fire from their storm bolters, cutting down three Gretchin skulking about in the large Ork building. It may not seem like much, but with Gretchin, the sooner you start killing them, the better. If you leave it too late, you'll find yourself swamped by a mass of green devils! Azrael also loosed off two shots from the bolter of his *Combi-weapon* but the Deathwing had killed all of the Gretchin in range!

My final act of the shooting phase was targetting the fearsome Ork Dreadnought with Squad Belial's lascannon. The devastating beam of power lanced directly into its hull, causing the metal beast to explode into a shower of white-hot metal shards. It had been destroyed without firing a shot, something to be very grateful for!

Nothing happened in the psychic phase, as both Steve and myself were dealt insufficient force cards to use the psychic powers that were in range. Instead, Brother Zamiel stored a card in his *Force Sword* and the turn ended. Things had started well, but I was worried about that Pulsa Rokkit. It didn't take a crystal ball to work out what it was going to be aimed at…



ORK TURN 1

Steve: Apart from the loss of my Dreadnought, I hadn't suffered too badly from the Dark Angels' opening fire, and I was feeling optimistic. The first thing to do in my turn was to see if my damaged Warbike stayed in control, but there was no problem as I passed the test easily. With my own Dreadnought gone, I had nothing left that could really hope to damage the Dark Angels' Dreadnought except for the Shokk Attack Gun. This, of course, had been *Delayed* by Gav's strategy card at the start of the battle, and so turned up now. I decided to bring it on directly opposite the Dreadnought in order to try and destroy this threat. Charging the Warbikes up the left flank, in the face of the Dreadnought's heavy fire, seemed suicidal, so I pulled the Evil Sunz back

around the Ork buildings to cover the area that my Dreadnought had been watching over before it had been reduced to a heap of smoking wreckage. Since I had accelerated them to combat speed, they had to perform numerous skid turns to get where I wanted them to go. Though they made these all safely only one would be able to fire his weapons this turn, since the others were much too concerned with not crashing into each other!

The Snakebites carried on with their original plan, moving as quickly as they could into the cover of the nearby jungle. On the opposite flank, Skabskrag, Noshrok and the Nobz ran through the jungle on this side of the table towards the objective that the Deathwing Terminators were clearly also heading for. I opened fire first with the artillery battery. The Traktor Kannon and Smasha Gun were both unable to draw lines of sight on any targets, so the Splatta Kannon fired my opening shot. After bouncing round maniacally, and giving Gav a few good scares as the shell flew past perilously close to his troops, it finally fell to the ground doing no damage at all. The Pulsa Rokkit, however, would have more success. Loading it up with just the right amount of fuel, I managed to land it right in the middle of his Terminators and characters. This would mean that in Gav's next turn they would be flattened and unable to move, holding them back from their objective and subjecting them to another round of fire from my other heavy weapons.

Unfortunately, none of my other shots had any effect at all. The Deathskulls were obviously still busy tinkering with their kustom kombi-weapons, as none that hit were able to take down their targets, and the Gretchins' autogun fire just bounced harmlessly off the Deathwing's mighty Terminator armour. Finally, the one Evil Sunz biker who was still able to fire was obviously still a bit unsteady as he also missed.

With no hand-to-hand combat on the table, we moved straight onto the psychic phase. Once again, Zagwort had insufficient power to use any of his powers that were in range, and he could only sit and watch helplessly as the Dark Angel's Librarian brought up *Strength of Mind* to defend the Deathwing from psychic attack.

TURN 1 VICTORY POINTS

DARK ANGELS:	**2**
ORKS:	**0**

DARK ANGELS TURN 2

Gav: The Pulsa Rokkit sent out its field, knocking the entirety of the Deathwing and all my characters to the ground and leaving them unable to move or fight! Still, I had expected this, and at least Steve hadn't rolled a double (which would have meant the pulsa field continued for another

The damaged Warbikes collide with each other, causing mayhem and confusion at the back of the Ork army!

turn!). Squad Apollyon went onto overwatch, waiting for the Snakebites to emerge from behind the woods, while Brother Asteroth moved slightly so that he could target the Deathskull Lootas and the newly arrived Shokk Attack Gun team.

Once again the Dreadnought fired a salvo of frag missiles (three this time) which arced across the battlefield to erupt in a ripple of explosions around the Mekboy and his thrice-cursed Shokk Attack Gun. Three Snotling bases were wounded (they have three wounds each!) and the Runtherd was torn to pieces by the fragmentation warheads. The Mekboy, however, remained unscathed and continued busying himself with the preparations for firing! The beams of the twin-linked lascannon then plucked a Deathskull from his hiding place in the Ork stronghold. As a final measure, the auto-launchers atop Brother Asteroth's hull spewed a volley of blind grenades, shielding him from the Shokk Attack Gun. If the enemy can't see you, they can't shoot you!

The lascannon of Squad Belial picked out the speeding form of a Warbike, once again destroying its autocannons and damaging the controls. I just wish one of the machines would blow up and have done with it! The psychic phase was quiet: Steve failed to nullify Brother Zamiel's *Strength of Mind* and that was it. The Shokk Attack Gun was beginning to give me worries, and I think I should have redeployed Brother Asteroth while I could. Still, the Deathwing were back on their feet and would continue to bear down on their objective with ruthless tenacity.

ORK TURN 2

Steve: With so much of his army levelled by the Pulsa Rokkit last turn, Gav had been unable to inflict any serious damage on me, and so I was still feeling pretty good about my situation. Before my movement, we rolled for the blind grenades fired from the Dreadnought's auto-launchers, which shrank and wandered slightly, but not enough to give me a line of sight to the wretched machine. Next, I had to roll for my two damaged Warbikes, both of which went out of control! With all my bikes so bunched up around the back of the buildings, this was potentially a total disaster for the Evil Sunz. As the first bike careered out of control it smashed into they one in front, but both managed to emerge unscathed. Unfortunately, the second bike was not so lucky. It smashed into the same bike that had been hit in the first collision, instantly killing the driver and sending his bike out of control! This collided again with the other bike from the first collision. The remaining two bikes accelerated to fast speed (to get out of the way), speeding along the side of the fences so that they could bring their autocannons to bear on the Deathwing. The Boarboyz then stormed out of their cover towards the tactical squad in the ruins ready to charge next turn, but were greeted by a hail of overwatch fire which cut down one of them. On the right flank the Nobz, with Noshrok and Skabskrag, continued their steady approach towards Gav's objective. Lastly the Shokk Attack Gun went onto overwatch, in the hope that the blind grenades would clear next turn before the Dreadnought would have time to move away.

Since the Pulsa Rokkit had already been launched, the Splatta Kannon was the only piece of artillery that could fire. Unfortunately, its shell embedded straight into the ground without bouncing at all. The Warbikes and Deathskulls then opened fire into the Terminators, but although they scored numerous hits and wounds, the only casualty was one of the Deathskulls whose weapon blew up in his hands! I was beginning to get the feeling that nothing was going to damage the Deathwing. Finally, the Boarboyz opened fire on the tactical squad with their bolt pistols, but failed to hit. Again, with no hand-to-hand combat to resolve, we went straight into the psychic phase. Yet again, the Warphead had insufficient force, and the Dark Angels' Librarian hurled a deadly *Lightning*

towering Dreadnought anyway! Steve sent two of the wounded Snotling bases through the perils of the warp, only for him to roll a Misfire on the Artillery dice! I fervently prayed to the Emperor for Steve to roll the DESTROYED result on the Misfire chart, but it was not to be. The Snotlings being fired were lost but there was no permanent damage. Oh well, things can't go your way all the time, and I certainly was having my share of luck (for once)!

Brother Isaiah, the Techmarine accompanying Squad Apollyon, loosed off two long range shots from his bolt pistol, striking one of the Warbikes screaming towards the Deathwing. However, both shots hit the armoured body of the Warbike (rather than the rider) and had no chance of penetrating. The rest of Squad Apollyon used their rapid fire ability to fire a torrent of shells at the Boarboyz who were foolishly standing in the open. Three shots hit home and wounded, but only a single boar-riding Snakebite fell from his mount.

Brother Asteroth could just make out one of the Weirdboy's Minderz skulking in the tower across the ruins, and loosed off a single frag missile. It wasn't worth risking a salvo (and therefore a jam) because there was no other targets I could see that were close enough to hit. The missile streaked across the battlefield and hit home, engulfing the entire group in the explosion! However, only the original Minder fell – the Weirdboy and other Minderz' Toughness proving too much this time. Next, the twin lascannons swivelled around to bring the closest Warbike into the firing line. As expected, the shot struck home and the thin armour was no match for the raw power of a lascannon. I rolled for the two damage results and an interesting situation arose. One of the results indicated that the Warbike would flip into the air before being destroyed, while the other roll said it would move out of control next turn after which its fuel tanks would explode.

The proximity of the Deathwing and other Evil Sun Ork meant that it was important which of these results applied. Heeding more to dramatic flair than anything else, we decided that the Warbike would flip over now and explode next turn. My luck stayed with me as the machine was blown into the air, coming down atop the other Warbike, crushing the driver! My Dreadnought was proving to be as awesome as I'd wished and Steve had feared.

Arc at the Boarboyz. This looked like serious trouble as all Gav needed to do was not roll any ones and he could wipe out the entire unit! Mind you, once you've said "anything but a one" it's impossible to roll anything but, and Gav only managed to kill two before the lightning stopped!

Despite this lucky escape, my earlier optimism was slowly starting to wane – my losses were building up, the Deathwing Terminators were looking more invulnerable the ever, and I had yet to kill even a single Space Marine!

TURN 2 VICTORY POINTS

DARK ANGELS:	**2**
ORKS:	**0**

DARK ANGELS TURN 3

Gav: With the blind screen beginning to disperse, I moved my Dreadnought into more substantial cover, bringing the ruins occupied by Squad Apollyon between the Shokk Attack Gun and Brother Asteroth. The Deathwing Terminators continued their relentless march into the teeth of the Ork guns. However, I kept the ruins between them and the Ork artillery, and only a lucky bounce from the Splatta cannon would give me any trouble from that direction. One of the squad turned towards the approaching mega-armoured Nobz, his storm bolter at the ready.

When it became apparent that Brother Asteroth wasn't going to be too foolhardy, the overwatching Mekboy fired his Shokk Attack Gun at Squad Apollyon instead. If Steve had a lucky scatter, the warp tunnel might just clip the

"...the Deathwing Terminators were looking more invulnerable the ever, and I had yet to kill even a single Space Marine!"

double the Supreme Grand Master's Movement, Attacks and Initiative and allow him to fire twice in the shooting phase. My plan was for him to charge into the Nobz and cut them to little pieces with the *Sword of Secrets*, his potent power weapon.

It was not to be though, as Steve triumphantly cast down the *Daemonic Attack* card and the power was stopped in its tracks. Worse was to come, as I rolled a one for Brother Zamiel's test and my Epistolary was dragged into the warp, a curse on his lips! Now I had almost no protection against the Ork Weirdboy's powers...

"...my Epistolary was dragged into the warp, a curse on his lips! "

The Deathwing once again opened up with their storm bolters, dividing their fire between the approaching Gretchin and Nobz in mega-armour. The Nobz were unharmed, but two Gretchin fell to the rapid fire of the rest of the squad (a fairly miserable display). Azrael once again tried to rapid fire his bolter at the Deathskull Lootas (as a character he could choose to ignore the Gretchin who were closer). However, he proved to be out of range and the shots were wasted. As a final disgrace, the lascannon-armed Space Marine in Squad Belial hit one of the Boarboyz but failed to wound the marauding Snakebite!

The psychic phase was more eventful this turn, though I'd rather it hadn't been... Things started well, with Brother Zamiel getting *Ultimate Force* and using it to cast *Lightning Arc* again. The forks of psychic lightning jumped to one of the Gretchin, frying it instantly. Another diminutive greenskin fell to the power before the electricity leapt to engulf the Weirdboy himself. Unfortunately, the Weirdboy's Toughness of 5 proved too high and the supposedly earth-shattering power left him totally unharmed!

Worse was to come. After Steve had passed his turn, Zamiel drew the energy from his *Force Sword* and started to cast *Quickening* on Azrael. This would

ORK TURN 3

Steve: Despite killing the Dark Angels' Librarian in the previous turn, things were still not looking too good for me. I only had two Boarboyz left, and my remaining Warbikes were badly damaged and scattered all over the place. The rest of my army had proved singularly incompetent when it came to shooting the enemy. Things were made worse when both of the Evil Sunz were unable to keep control of their bikes. One careered off the table, while the other crashed into the side of a building, damaging it even further! The bike whose rider had been killed the previous turn also ran out of control, narrowly missing one of the Terminators before crashing into the rock behind the Deathwing!

The final bike exploded, but no one was in range of the flying debris. Following this debacle, the Boarboyz charged the Space Marines in the ruins, ignoring the booby traps surrounding them.

Although one trap was set off, both the Boarboy and the Space Marine caught in the blast survived. The Gretchin now began moving out towards the objective, as Noshrok, Skabskrag and the Nobz closed in on it. I would need every chance I could get to push one of my figures close than any of Gav's by the end of the game. Finally, the Shokk Attack Gun went onto overwatch again, still hoping that the blind grenades would clear enough to allow him to get a shot at Gav's Dreadnought.

Once again the resilience of the Terminators brought me only dismay in the shooting phase. The Splatta Kannon finally managed to hit something – one of the Deathwing – but it failed to wound! The Nobz were now close enough to hurl their krak grenades, but not only did they fail to penetrate the Terminator armour, but one went off in the Nobz hand! Fortunately his mega-armour was sufficient to protect him.

Noshrok was now close enough to shoot his *Kustom Shoota*, but missed. Finally, the Deathskulls opened fire, but all three kustom kombi-weapons, which roll randomly to determine their strength each turn, came up as strength two, the lowest possible! Understandably, none of them managed to cause any damage at all.

The Snakebite Nob hit his Cyboar Chemical Injection while charging, and so he gained an extra D4 attacks. Rolling a 4 he ended up with seven attacks! Even so, although he won the combat easily, none of his hits managed to penetrate the Sergeant's power armour. The other Boarboy was killed in his combat. This was not how things were supposed to be going!

Finally came the psychic phase. I knew that I had to keep the Dark Angels away from the objective, and so I immediately chose to throw a *Death Wave* towards it. It would keep travelling forwards each turn, most probably striking the objective at the end of Gav's next turn. This would mean any Space Marines that he moved too close would be struck by the *Death Wave* as it rolled past. Gav would have a tough choice to make. Would he hold back from the objective and

TURN 3 VICTORY POINTS

DARK ANGELS: 5

ORKS: 3

hope my Gretchin and Nobz couldn't get closer, or move right in and risk having his Terminators and Characters wiped out by the *Death Wave*?

Ignoring the surrounding Booby Traps, the Boarboyz charge into the Dark Angels of Squad Apollyon.

DARK ANGELS TURN 4

Gav: It's make or break time! I had an awful decision to make: I had to work out which was the best way to secure the objective. One method would be simply to run the entire Deathwing squad so that there was nothing but Terminator armour filling the area. However, this would stop them firing and would place them right in the path of the Ork *Death Wave*, a prospect I didn't particularly relish (if the Ork player can equal or beat an affected model's Toughness with a D6 roll, it is killed, regardless of wounds, armour or anything – ouch!). Alternatively, I could move toward the objectively normally (this would bring me close enough to capture it) and use the *Standard of Fortitude* to blaze away at the Gretchin and Nobz. In the end I decided the second option was my best chance, and it didn't put anybody at greater risk than they were already in.

Then I realised I had made a fatal error! I had known last turn that my Dreadnought would be best used moving across to fire upon the Nobz, but this now meant that I would have to move in front of the overwatching Shokk Attack Gun. I should have remembered that auto-launchers carry two salvoes of grenades, and last turn I could have fired another blind screen to move behind. As it was, I had forgotten, and thinking that I was out of ammo I took the plunge and moved Brother Asteroth across without any cover. With a deep thrumming noise, the Mekboy fired the Shokk Attack Gun, sending all four remaining Snotling bases through the warp tunnel. It was bang on target, and the massive armoured machine shuddered and then ground to an ominous halt. Brother Asteroth was dead!

PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE

Steve: In the Orks' third turn, my Weirdboy sent a *Death Wave* hurtling towards Gav's objective. Because *Death Wave* moves a random distance, I wanted to be sure that it would reach the objective, so I cast the power a turn before Gavin got there. This meant Gav had one extra psychic phase to nullify it, but without his Librarian I didn't think his chances were too good. In my experience I've found it is always better to anticipate what your enemy will do and try to prevent him from following his plan rather than mopping things up afterwards. Don't be afraid to go onto overwatch, or hide troops, and so on. Any trick you can pull that makes your opponent think twice about a certain course of action will swing things in your favour.

The firing started with the Gretchin being engulfed with heavy flamer fire from the Deathwing. Two of them succumbed immediately, while another was set alight and was bound to die next turn. The Nobz proved more resilient, saved time after time by either their mega-armour or the medi squigs inside the suits. Storm bolter fire pattered off them like rain, however Azrael's plasma gun proved to be more effective, tearing apart one of the Ork Nobz with a crackling bolt of energy. The lascannon of Squad Belial roasted another, but the remaining Ork passed his break test. Even another fusillade of bolt pistol fire from Brother Bethor and Squad Belial had no effect! And I thought the Deathwing were supposed to be hard!

In the hand-to-hand combat phase, the veteran sergeant leading Squad Apollyon managed to get the better of the Snakebite Nob he was fighting, but even his mighty power sword failed to wound. However, the Space Marine who had followed up last turn drew his bolt pistol and promptly shot th Ork through the back of his head!

The *Death Wave* moved inexorably over my objective, without no harm done, while the Weirdboy attempted *Kop Dis* on the lead Terminator (which would fling him backward) However, I was lucky enough to nullify it.

ORK TURN 4

Steve: Well, the moment of judgement was upon us. I would have to make sure that Gav didn't hold the objective by the end of this turn or all would have been for nothing. To start with, the burning Gretchin was consumed by the flames. His comrades then charged forward, as did Skabskrag. Even so, it would be a close call as to whether or not they were closer than the Deathwing. The last Nob also moved up. Hopefully he could take out the closest Terminator with a krak grenade.

Noshrok, the last Nob, and the three remaining Deathskulls all opened fire on the Terminators, desperate to cut down at least the one closest to his objective. I jumped with joy as I hit, and then wounded, and then got through the armour once, and then again! But then Gav pointed out that since the Terminators were within 3" of the *Lion Helm* they got an additional save! And both passed! I only had my Splatta Kannon left to fire now. It was risky, with so many of my own troops so close to the target, but I reckoned that it was worth it. Unfortunately the shot did nothing, crashing into the ground after a single bounce. My only chance now was that the Warphead could blast that Terminator in the psychic phase.

Kop Dis would be invaluable now, just so long as Gav couldn't nullify it. I threw my cards down to bring the power into play, waiting to see if Gav could reply… and he couldn't! He failed his *Lion Helm* save and the Terminator was hurled back into another of the squad, and though neither of them were killed, it clearly gave me the objective, and the game!

"and though neither of them were killed, it clearly gave me the objective, and the game!"

FINAL VICTORY POINTS

DARK ANGELS:	**6**
ORKS:	**7**

WAAAGH!

Steve: It's always scary fighting with an Ork army, because even if you win you invariably suffer horrendous casualties. This game was no exception. My forces had taken a serious mauling from the Dark Angels, and I had only managed to kill two of his models in return! Even so I still managed to scrape a win. This came about for several reasons. Firstly, the two things I did kill (the Dreadnought

and the Librarian) were very costly, and so worth lots of victory points (especially with *Engage and Destroy* as my mission). This is one of the big problems with using a Space Marine army – everything is so expensive in points that it only takes a few things to be killed to give away a lot of victory points. Secondly, I managed to stop Gav from completing his mission. The importance of missions can never be overstated in games of Warhammer 40,000 – it is rare (at least in the games that I've played) to lose a game to someone who fails to complete their mission. Regardless of troop losses, getting those bonus victory points must be your primary goal!

Thirdly, as always there was a degree of luck. If Gav had managed to finish off that last Warbike, kill the last of the Nobz, or shoot down one more Deathskull he could have won. A variety of factors just happened to combine to give me the victory. But more importantly, we both agreed that it was a really good game. The Orks' weaponry is always entertaining, so even when it goes wrong and you get completely trounced you still have lots of fun. And when you can have all this fun and *win* as well… well it's more than a young Bad Moon like me can take.

THE UNFORGIVEN

Gav: I return to The Rock in disgrace, another black mark against the Dark Angels' name. Well a grey mark, since I think I did almost everything possible to achieve my mission. My one major mistake led to the loss of the Dreadnought and my ultimate defeat – the second auto launchers salvo would've given Brother Asteroth freedom to move across without any risk at all. I always forget something!

The Librarian's death had serious consequences, mainly the lack of nullifies (with his *Psychic Hood*) and the loss of *Quickening* which would have been very useful against the Painboy and Nobz. The unwillingness of the last Warbike (worth 2 victory points) to die also niggles me, since it was in no position to do any harm whatsoever, but was, technically, not disabled since it could still move. What else? Oh, nobody failed a break test so my *Craven Cowardice* card was useless. If only the Deathskulls had mourned their losses more, or the Gretchin suffered enough losses to lose their nerve, I would have drawn or even won. Curses, life can be so unfair sometimes! Still, best not to get obsessive (everybody tells me to stop moaning and get on with it!). So let's look on the bright side…

The Dark Angels performed brilliantly, surviving all sorts of enemy fire. Laurels go to Squad Apollyon for not only forcing the Warbikes to confront the Terminators, but also for wiping out the Boarboyz, even in close combat! I knew Space Marines were hard, but that was something special. The Deathwing fulfilled their role with customary resilience, weathering everything that Steve threw at them without suffering a scratch. They really are as tough as their enemies fear!

"Oh dear! another battle report lost!"

The Deathwing fight their way towards their objective through a hail of Ork fire, only to be confronted by the Painboy and mega-armoured Nobz.

WARHAMMER 40,000

Civil War

By Jervis Johnson, Wai Lam and Lawrence Widdicombe.

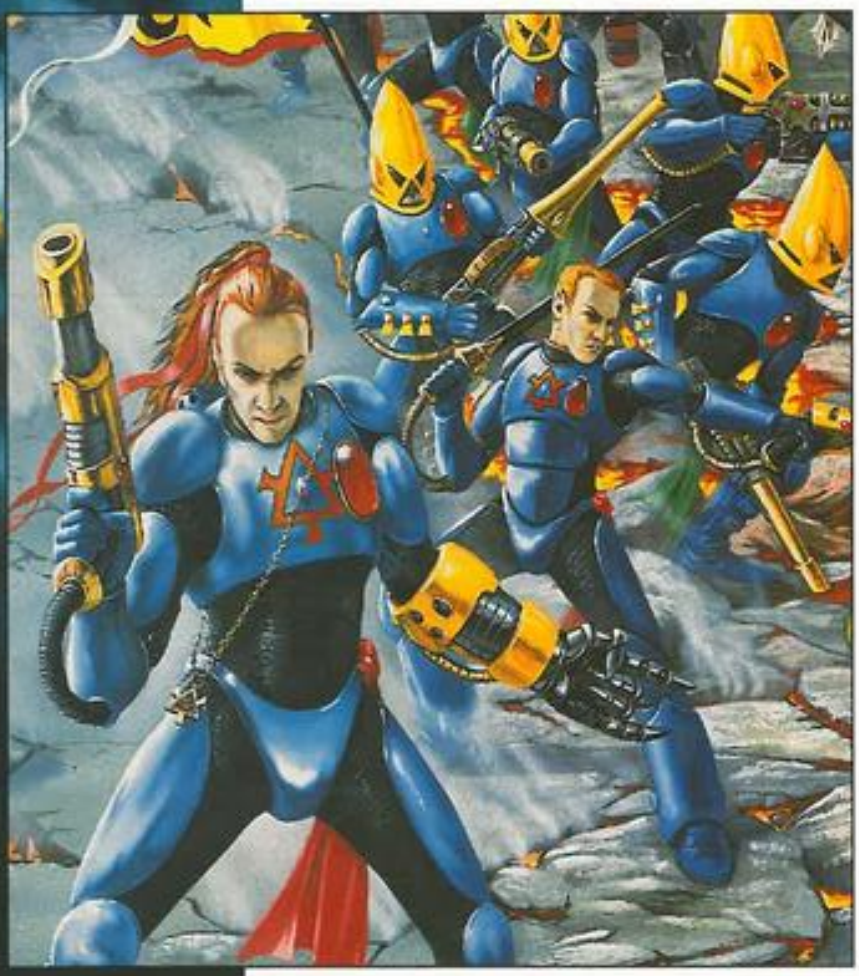
It's a showdown to decide who's the 1995 Supreme Warhammer 40,000 Champion...

INTRODUCTION

JJ: Many of you will remember, we hope fondly, the cataclysmic final confrontation (in White Dwarf 190) between David Cain, winner of the First International Warhammer Tournament, and Gordon Davidson, winner of the staff version of the same event. Well, we've finally lured the two winners of the First International Warhammer 40,000 Tournaments to the Studio for a similar showdown to decide who is the current supreme Warhammer 40,000 player.

The two players in question are Wai Lam, who won the First International Warhammer 40,000 tournament, and Lawrence Widdicombe who won the staff tournament. Wai pulled off his win with an excellent all-round performance, winning every game with his well-painted Eldar army, scoring 19 out of 20 in the test and managing to collect four Sportsmanship awards out of a possible five! Lawrence's victory rested more firmly on the resounding wins he scored in his games and the excellent painting technique on his models, but his was also a truly impressive all-round performance. Interestingly, Lawrence also used an Eldar army, which meant that our final would be a "civil war" between two Eldar forces.

Anyway, after a bit of planning we were able to arrange for both Lawrence and Wai to be in the Studio on the same day. Each brought the same army they had used in their tournaments, and we were using the same rules to determine the victor. Of these, the only really important change to the normal Warhammer 40,000 rules was that no mission cards were to be used. Instead, each player scored victory points as normal for killing the enemy, plus 2 bonus points for eliminating the opposing commander and a further 2 victory points for each quarter of the table occupied only by their troops at the end of the battle. In addition, we decided that they could each pick from their own psychic power decks, rather than both having to draw from a single Eldar deck.



With the preliminaries out of the way, (and following a tour of the Studio so that our two star players could have a chance to look at some of the top secret stuff we're working on – and which they've *sworn* not to tell a soul about, so don't ask them!), we were all ready to start.

However, before we started setting up the armies, each player drew their psychic cards and strategy cards. Lawrence managed to get the *Traitor* strategy card which he used straight away to increase his strategy rating by D3 points. He rolled the maximum possible on the dice, adding 3 points to his strategy rating. This meant that Wai automatically had to set up first, as he now had a lower strategy rating, and it also meant that Lawrence was much more likely to get the first turn. Whilst Wai started to deploy his army, I took Lawrence to one side to ask him about his army, his choice of troops and anything else that came to mind. Once Wai had finished setting up, Lawrence would deploy his army and it would be Wai's turn to face the bright lights of the interrogation.

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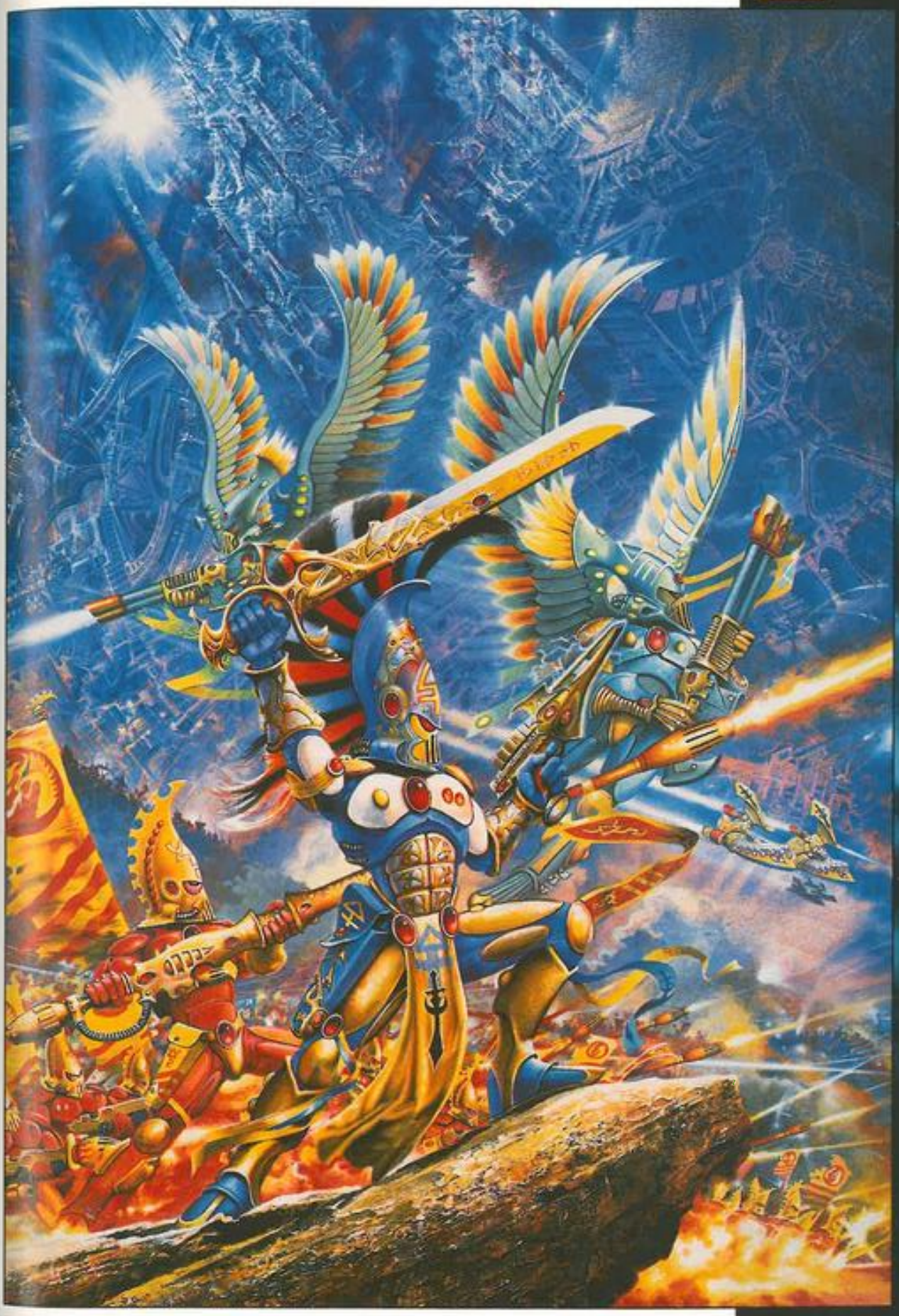


LAWRENCE'S ARMY

JJ: So Lawrence, is there anything you'd like to tell me about your tournament army? For example, why did you pick what you've picked?

LW: I picked most of it because I've got lots of different things painted in my army and I just wanted to take a broad spectrum and include as many things as possible, rather than just concentrating on one thing. Not knowing what army I was going to be fighting against in the tournament, I wanted to cover every eventuality. I took the Guardians mainly because they are cheap units, and with shuriken catapults they can be real Space Marine killers: with Strength 4 and -2 save they'll kill anything. For fighting Eldar it makes life a lot easier.

JJ: You've got five Guardians on Jetbikes…

LW: Yes, I intend to use them almost as a screen, not so much against heavy weapon fire, but against basic weapon fire. There is only a 1-in-3 chance of hitting the rider, and if you hit the canopy it bounces off most of the time. It uses up their fire because it's the closest target. The same goes for the Wraithguard, they tend to absorb a hell of a lot of basic firepower without going over at all.

JJ: I see you've taken the ever-popular scatter laser weapon platform.

LW: The scatter laser's my overwatch unit. I use it to keep an eye on things like enemy Swooping Hawks or jump pack Space Marines, anything like that. That's what I use the scatter laser for. The Dire Avengers I took just to back up the Guardians. I went for massed firepower more than anything else.

JJ: What about enemy tanks?

LW: The Wraithguard and the Banshee Exarch were the ones I took to deal with any vehicles, also the Farseer as well. He's got *Combat Drugs*, which gives him Strength 5, Strength 9 with his *Witch Blade*. He'll tear apart any tank and he's got better armour penetration than a power fist! He also charges 20", which is quite scary for most people. In the staff tournament I killed every enemy commander with him! For the Banshee I took *Bounding Leap* and *Turn Aside Blow*. The *Bounding Leap* gives you an extra 4" of movement and the ability to cross obstacles, and the *Turn Aside Blow* was just in case she got charged.

Because she has a *Displacer Field* she can usually take it, and because she has *Bounding Leap* she can bound out of the combat and charge back in on her following turn. That happened in one of the tournament games: she got charged by five Ogryns, managed to do a wound on each of them, jumped out and then charged back in and killed them all! She's also got *Frenzon*, which I usually use to instill *Hatred*. This is really powerful, because her opponents don't get to roll any dice if she charges, and she can reroll her own dice if she gets a bad score on both of them. If you roll double 1 you've got a chance to reroll it! She's got a chainsword as well which, with *Turn Aside Blow*, gives her two parries! She took out a Demolisher in the staff tournament. I didn't even know what it did, because it hadn't been released!

JJ: What about the assault troops – the Swooping Hawks and Striking Scorpions?

LW: The Swooping Hawks I tend to use to make people go onto overwatch. People expect them to be flying all over the place and so they tend to put things on overwatch. I've got a large unit of Scorpions for no other reason than I like them! (laughs) I just like them, and I've given them all back banners, so they're quite pretty.

JJ: Most people seem to prefer Howling Banshees to Striking Scorpions…

LW: Yeah, but Banshees are like one-shot weapons: you charge them in, they kill some things, but if they don't kill everything or they get charged themselves, then they die. A Striking Scorpion will go toe-to-toe with a Space Marine quite happily, and take an Assault Marine out, because the mandiblasters can shoot 'em as they come or he charges them, he's got Strength 4, -2 save in the combat. He can shoot as well, and they've got a better armour save, it's 3+ like a Space Marine. They're just good all-round troops.

JJ: What about the Warp Spiders?

LW: Warp Spiders are something I wasn't going to take, but I was working in the Kingston store and this guy said "Why aren't you taking Warp Spiders?", and it was due to this guy that I took them. Anyway, I don't know the guy's name, but

ENERGY FIELDS

JJ: You'll notice from their army lists that both Lawrence and Wai have Farseers that are equipped with *Displacer Fields*. Those of you who have read this month's Q&A article will know that this is not allowed. The *Displacer Field* will interfere with the Farseer's Rune armour, which is in itself an energy field.

Both players were willing to use this ruling. However, as both had the same advantage, I decided to let them carry on and use their armies in exactly the same form as they had in the tournaments.

LAWRENCE WIDDICOMBE'S ELDAR HOST

Farseer with melta-gun, blind grenades, *Displacer Field*, *Witch Blade*, *Spirit Stone* and *Combat Drugs*.

3 **Howling Banshees** led by a **Howling Banshee Exarch** armed with a power glove and chainsword, equipped with *Frenzon* and a *Displacer Field*. She has the *Bounding Leap* and *Turn Aside Blow* warrior powers.

2 squads of **Guardians** armed with laspistols and shuriken catapults. Their leaders carry power swords. One squad also carries frag grenades.

3 **Swooping Hawks**.

5 **Guardian Jetbikes** including one **Shrieker Jetbike**.

Scatter Laser support platform. Two crew with laspistols, one is also armed with a shuriken catapult.

5 **Striking Scorpions**.

4 **Dire Avengers**.

4 **Warp Spiders**

I'd just like to say thank you, because they proved to be one of the best things in my army, especially when I fought against Orks and the Imperial Guard with their low Initiatives. They can really make people worried with their high movement, but I don't know how well they'll do against other Eldar. That's it really.

JJ: That sounds like the lot then.

LW: Yeah, a lot of thought went into it. Oh, I've tried to keep most units under 100 points. The Warp Spiders and Wraithguard are over, but if you take the minimum number they're over 100 anyway. The Striking Scorpions are over too, but that's because I like them. Great, that's it.

JJ: With that it was time to see how Wai was getting on.

WAI LAM'S ARMY

Wai had set up by now, but before he came along to tell me about his army he played the *Divine Inspiration* strategy card, adding +1 to the Leadership of all his troops.

JJ: OK Wai, if you'd like to tell me why you've picked what you've picked in your tournament army?

WL: Well one thing about my army which does surprise lots of people is that there are an awful lot of Guardians, probably about two thirds of it. A lot of people don't expect this, as the Guardians are one of the more under-rated basic troops. I also like to have a mix of weapons, so that I don't seem to be "power-gaming", so they're not all armed with shuriken catapults. I've kept the old Eldar army ratio of one lasgun or assault Guardian squad per shuriken catapult-armed squad.

(Wai is referring to an older version of the Eldar army list which had a limit on the number of shuriken catapult-armed Guardian squads that could be taken. His comment on not appearing to be a "power gamer" is an important one for future tournament players to note. One of the reasons Wai won the tournament is that he picked up four out of five possible sportsmanship awards. This was partially because he'd chosen an army that he hoped would be seen as being fair and reasonable, both by the umpires giving points for army selection, and also by opponents fighting against it. Such foresight and breadth of vision served Wai very well, and was one of the major reasons he won.)

WL: The Guardians give a good solid core, and I had Aspect Warriors to add flavour to the army. I picked Jain Zar because of all the Phoenix Lords I think she's the least awe-inspiring. She can be taken down by basic weapons and she hasn't got any other fields or options for fields. A lot of Eldar players take other Phoenix Lords and give them fields or extra wargear cards…

JJ: Yeah, yeah, I understand! We're trying to stop people doing that kind of stuff (*See* The J Files *on page 65 – Ed*).

WL: But also she's good for taking out high powered characters like Assassins, Chaos Champions – which she did in the tournament – and killing enemy Commanders, if she gets the opportunity. I also picked three Banshees as sort of hand maidens to Jain Zar and as a back-up to my Guardian close combat squad. They'll work as a team.

JJ: Both you and Lawrence have Guardian Jetbike squads…

WL: Yes. I normally end up using them as sacrifices or flying support – I'll just have to see how it goes. The Dire Avengers are good solid troops and all-rounders, and it would have seemed odd not to take them because they are the most common Aspect. I use them as a bodyguard for the Farseer – it gives an enemy something else to charge before they can get at him. And there's the Fire Dragons. The Exarch is equipped with a *Fire Pike* with *Armour-piercing Ammo* to take out tanks and Dreadnoughts. It's a single one-shot weapon and I've had it fail miserably and bounce off a Leman Russ, but more often than not it should do some serious damage. As for the Fire Dragons themselves, what a lot of people forget is that you can use a melta-gun in close combat with a tank. I've charged them at vehicles and people think "Oh, they can't do anything!" and promptly get shredded!

JJ: You've got quite a few support platforms.

WL: Yes. The scatter laser is an all-rounder. You get guaranteed shots to pick off enemy squads and if you stick it on overwatch you might pick off jump pack troops or other things flying around – it's something people really fear. The D-cannons, well, I like the random element, it's just a bit of fun more often than not. I took two because you can never trust your luck with just one, and two's a little bit more reliable. Also, if the other person's taken a really nasty character, a D-cannon's like a mobile vortex grenade. If it hits it's got a fair chance of destroying them with no armour saves.

JJ: What about the Farseer?

WL: Well he's just equipped to be used as a psyker. After picking the wargear I didn't really

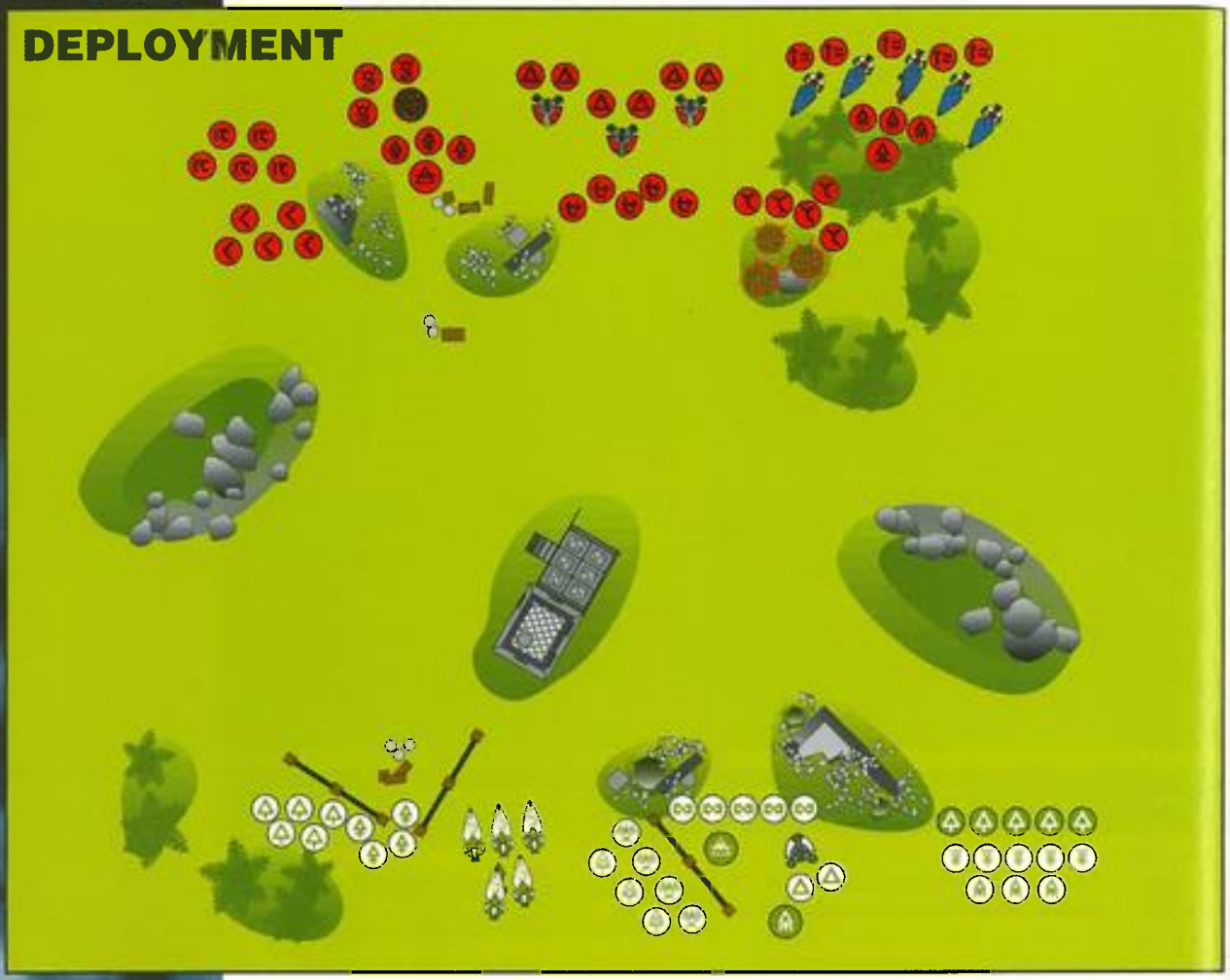
WAI LAM'S ELDAR HOST

- **Farseer** with laspistol, Displacer Field, *Seer Runes*, *Witch Blade* and *Psychic Hood*.
- 3 **Fire Dragons** led by a **Fire Dragon Exarch** armed with a *Fire Pike* with *Armour-piercing Ammo*. The Exarch has the warrior powers *Tough* and *Stealth*.
- 5 **Guardians** armed with laspistols, shuriken pistols and power swords.
- 5 **Guardians** armed with laspistols and lasguns.
- 3 squads of 5 **Guardians** each, armed with laspistols and shuriken catapults.
- **Jain Zar** with *Silent Death*, *Mask of Jain Zar* and *Blade of Destruction*. She has *Bounding Leap*, *Distract* and *Battle Fortune* warrior powers.
- 3 **Howling Banshees**.
- 3 **Dire Avengers**.
- 2 **Distort cannon** support platforms with 2 crew each armed with a laspistol and a shuriken catapult.
- **Scatter laser** support platform with 2 crew each armed with a laspistol and a shuriken catapult.
- 5 **Guardian Jetbikes** including one **Shrieker Jetbike**.
- *Booby Traps*

have the points to give him a good ranged weapon as well. He won't actually commit into the battle for anything. He's mainly anti-psychic and coordinating things. Normally, I only have to commit him when I want to. If I do send him in, he's got his *Witch Blade*, and there's *Seer Runes* for when I *have* to stop that power and, erm, the *Psychic Hood* which means if you get a Nullify card in your hand you're most likely to nullify the enemy power, which is important. That's a basic run-down on why I picked the army.

JJ: Thanks Wai, that's just fine!

DEPLOYMENT



Lawrence's attack is disrupted right from the start, as Wai plays the *Booby Traps* strategy card!

LAWRENCE TURN 1

JJ: And so battle commenced! Lawrence, aided by the 3 point bonus his *Brilliant Strategy* card had added to his strategy rating, easily won the first turn. However, before he could move any models, Wai played the ace he had hidden up his own sleeve – the *Booby Traps* strategy card. After some pondering, Wai placed the booby traps so that they could effect Lawrence's Jetbike squadron. Despite this, and although one bike set off a booby trap, all of them survived the experience unscathed and were able to move off.

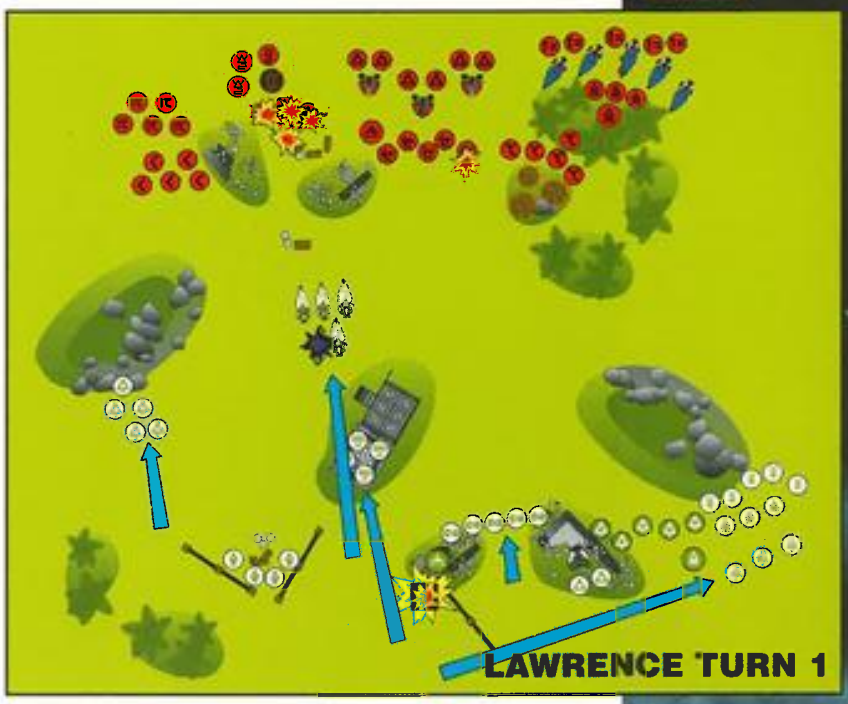
Lawrence's army now started to move forward. His Jetbikes accelerated up to combat speed and zoomed straight ahead towards Wai's Farseer. Meanwhile, other troops moved off round the left and right flanks: a squad of Guardians running up to occupy the hill on Lawrence's left, while his Striking Scorpions, Howling Banshees and Swooping Hawks moved round the hill on his right. In the centre, Lawrence's Warp Spiders jumped into the abandoned bunker, while the rest of his troops edged forward in support.

With most of Lawrence's army being armed with fairly short-ranged weapons, the first shooting phase was limited almost exclusively to his Jetbikes (the Guardian Squad on the right also shot, but caused no casualties). The four ordinary Jetbikes armed with twin-linked shuriken catapults fired at the Farseer and his bodyguard, scoring a total of nine hits which wiped out the Dire Avengers but caused no wounds on the Farseer himself. Next, the Shrieker Jetbike (with the greatly feared shuriken cannon) opened fire, causing 2 wounds to the Farseer, but to Wai's relief the psyker's *Displacer Field* saved him!

In the psychic phase it quickly became clear that both players saw their opponent's Farseer as their primary threat. Lawrence *Doom*ed Wai's Farseer, obviously hoping to ensure that he wouldn't survive if a lucky hit got past his *Displacer Field* in the future! Wai responded by using *Guide* with 2 force cards to fire one of the D-cannon at Lawrence's Jetbike squadron. The D-cannon shot scattered straight onto the Shrieker Jetbike, destroying it (much to Wai's delight). Lawrence retaliated by attempting to use *Executioner* to attack Wai's Farseer with his own commander, but unfortunately he was out of range. Wai counter-attacked, using *Mind War* to strip *Guide* from Lawrence's Farseer. Not to be outdone by this display of psychic strength, Lawrence's Farseer struck back with his own *Mind War* and took *Executioner* from Wai's Farseer!

WAI TURN 1

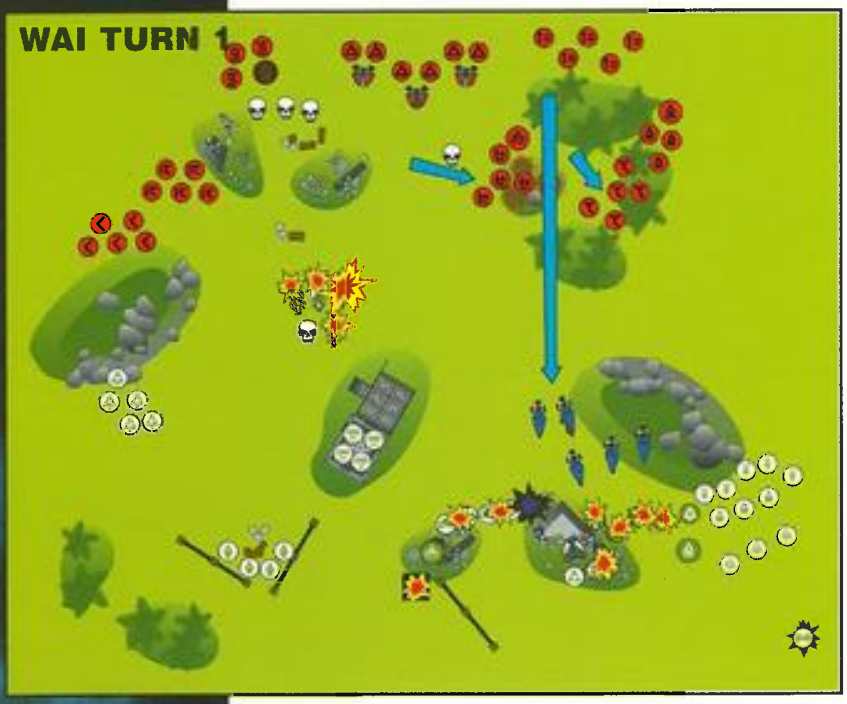
It was now Wai's first turn. He advanced his forces quite cautiously on his right flank, moving his troops into good firing positions from which to attack Lawrence's army. On Wai's left, his Howling Banshees and Guardian assault squad advanced more aggressively, obviously eager to engage their opposite numbers on the far side of the table. Wai's Jetbikes also roared forward on this flank, moving up to engage the Guardians and scatter laser.



In the shooting phase, Wai proceeded to unleash a veritable hail of fire against Lawrence's army. It started with Jain Zar picking off a Guardian with the *Silent Death*. The Guardians with lasguns hit, but failed to wound one of the nearby enemy Guardians. Next, Wai turned his attention to Lawrence's Jetbikes, firing at them with his shuriken catapult-armed Guardian squad and the Fire Dragons, including the Fire Dragon Exarch. A maelstrom of razor-edge discs and super-heated molecules enveloped the hapless Jetbikes, causing one of them to explode and killing all but one of the riders. Even the surviving biker didn't get off scot-free as the controls of his bike were damaged!

Meanwhile, the scatter laser and one of the D-cannon from Wai's support battery (aided and abetted by a squad of Guardians) let rip at the Wraithguard. The scatter laser caused a wound on one Wraithguard and destroyed another, the resulting explosion sucking a third Wraithguard into the warp and coming within a whisker of taking Lawrence's Farseer himself! Not to be outdone, the D-cannon crew also landed their shot right on target, destroying one more Wraithguard and displacing another one off to the far corner of the battlefield! To add insult to injury, even the

Eldar Jetbikes of the Bieltan craftworld skim low over the battlefield, strafing the enemy Dire Avengers and Farseer with deadly shuriken fire.



lowly Guardians were able to score a hit, knocking the last remaining Wraithguard to the ground and forcing it to miss its next turn as it stood back up!

Wai's second D-cannon turned its attention to the bunker holding the Warp Spiders. It also landed on target, and on a roll of 4 or more would have wiped out Lawrence's Warp Spiders. Luckily for Lawrence, Wai rolled a 1 and they survived! Nonetheless it was clear that they wouldn't be staying in the bunker for too long!

Finally, Wai's Jetbikes opened up, destroying the Guardian squad in front of them and and killing a crewman from the scatter laser. All in all, it had been a very effective shooting phase and Wai was clearly very pleased with the devastation he had wrought.

By comparison the psychic phase was very quiet, although it started well with Wai rolling a maximum 12 for the warp flux. However, the large number of cards meant that both players were well supplied with Nullifies, with the result that the only effective power to be used was the *Mind War* that Wai's Farseer was able to cast to strip *Executioner* from Lawrence's Farseer.

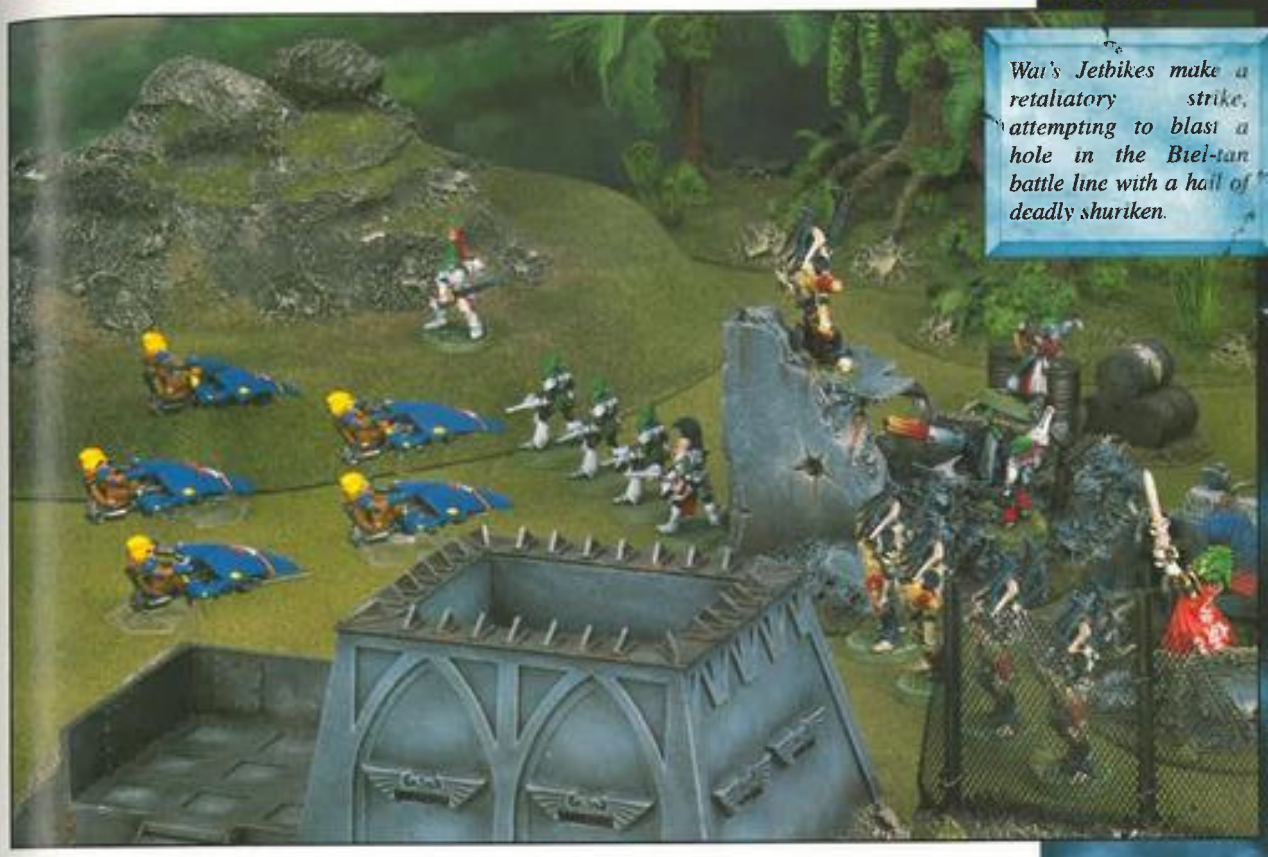
LAWRENCE TURN 2

Obviously shaken by the fire unleashed upon him by Wai's army, Lawrence moved cautiously. His second turn was spent regrouping and re-allocating his forces in the face of the losses he had suffered on the first turn. First of all, however, he had to move his three remaining Jetbikes, *all* of which were out of control, either because of damage or because the driver was dead. Two of the Jetbikes promptly collided and crashed in flames and the third, the only one with a surviving crewman, narrowly avoided the collision itself.

Elsewhere Lawrence carried on with his "right hook" attack, moving his Striking Scorpions and Howling Banshees onto the hill on his right. The Swooping Hawks and Howling Banshee Exarch, started moving over to Lawrence's left, to help fill the gap left by the destruction of his Jetbikes and Wraithguard. The Guardians on the hill to Lawrence's left moved into cover, taking up firing positions along the crest of the hill. Finally, the Warp Spiders teleported out of their rather exposed position in the bunker, materialising near Jain Zar.

The Warp Spiders led Lawrence's shooting phase, enveloping Jain Zar and her accompanying Guardians with webs of deadly monofilament wire. However, much to Lawrence's disgust, Jain Zar's *Battle Fortune* allowed her to survive the attack unscathed, even though she was hit twice, and in the end the Warp Spiders only managed to kill three of the Guardians with their fire. To add insult to injury, one of the Warp Spiders was killed in the warp when they made a second jump back into cover behind Lawrence's Howling Banshees and Striking Scorpions!

Attempting to even the score, Lawrence turned his attention on Wai's Jetbikes, firing at them with

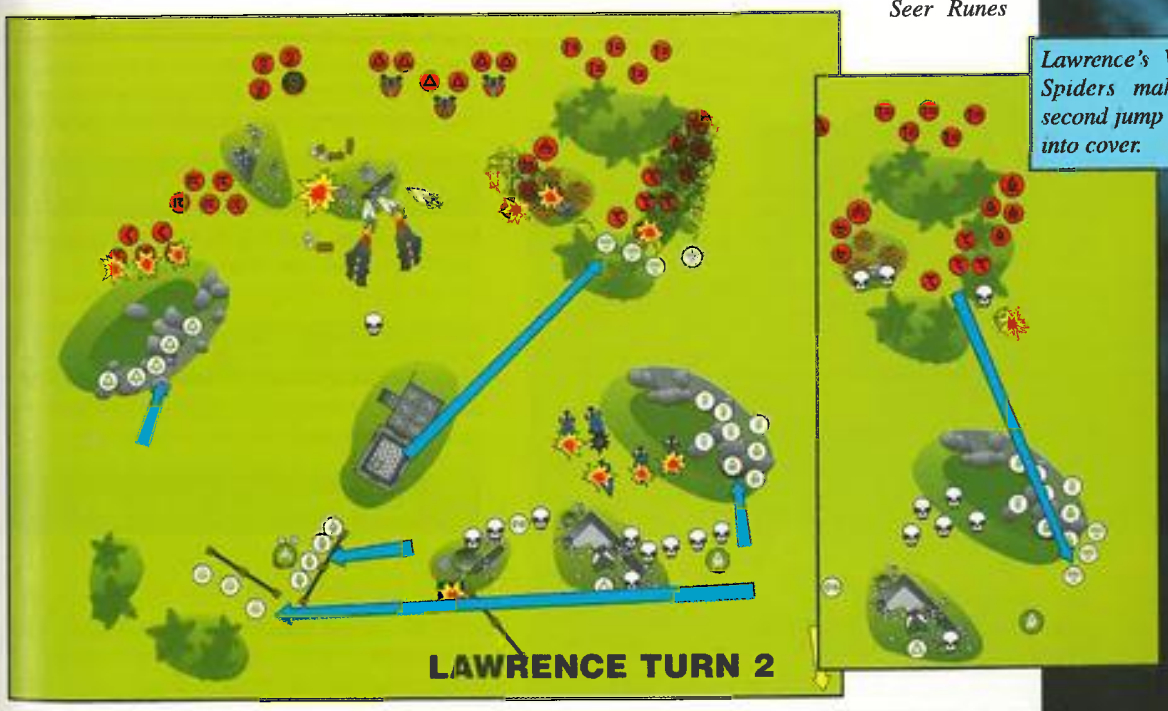


Wai's Jetbikes make a retaliatory strike, attempting to blast a hole in the Biel-tan battle line with a hail of deadly shuriken.

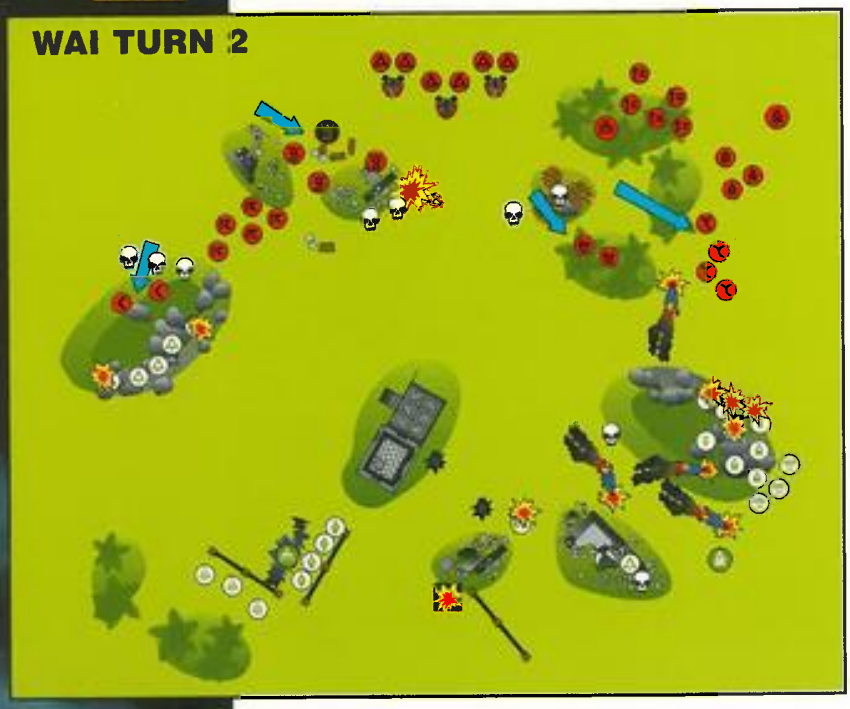
his scatter laser, the single remaining Wraithguard and his Dire Avenger squad. Not surprisingly, considering the weight of fire turned on them, the entire Jetbike squadron was effectively destroyed, the bikes either being shot to pieces or their Guardian drivers killed.

Lawrence's Striking Scorpions and his remaining Jetbike also fired, but caused no casualties. Finally, his Guardians on the hill opened fire with their shuriken catapults at Wai's lasgun-armed Guardians, killing three of the enemy squad.

The terrific mental battle taking place between the two Farseers carried on in the psychic phase. Lawrence used his *Spirit Stone* to pick up an extra four warp cards, but sadly they did him little good. Their only real benefit was forcing Wai to expend his *Seer Runes*



Lawrence's Warp Spiders make a second jump back into cover.



nullifying the force 3 *Mind War* that Lawrence unleashed with this additional power. Clearly frustrated by his inability to harm Wai's Farseer, Lawrence decided to risk engaging him in a *Psychic Duel*. Unfortunately, as so often happens, the *Psychic Duel* went against the caster and Lawrence's Farseer lost yet another power, leaving him with only *Mind War* left in his hand!

WAI TURN 2

By now things were clearly starting to go in Wai's favour. However, he didn't let this go to his head and stuck carefully to his plan. On his right, the Fire Dragons and Guardians moved into better firing positions, while on his left he spread out his troops in order to engage Lawrence's Striking Scorpions. Clearly, Wai planned to wear down Lawrence's army with his superior firepower rather than getting stuck in! In the shooting phase, Wai's fire finished off the destruction he had started in the first turn. The remaining Jetbike rider was killed by the Fire Dragons, and the lone surviving Wraithguard was taken down by the scatter laser support platform.

Wai's two Guardian squads on his right engaged Lawrence's Guardians entrenched on the hill in a firefight, killing two of them but not managing to break them. On the other flank, Wai's Howling Banshees, Guardians and Jain Zar all fired at the Striking Scorpions, killing four of the squad, although the single survivor bravely passed his break test. In fact neither player had failed a break test so far, although quite a few had been taken.

However, it was the psychic phase that provided the biggest shock of the turn (and perhaps the game). Things started innocuously enough with Wai using *Mind War* against Lawrence's Farseer, who reflected it back (though it finished out of range of anyone). Lawrence then gleefully used *Ultimate Force* to cast his own *Mind War* straight back against Wai's Farseer, only to find out to his horror that Wai held the *Daemonic Attack* card! When *Daemonic Attack* is used against a power cast with *Ultimate Force* the opposing psyker is still attacked as described on the card, although the power being used is not nullified (this is described at more length in the half time report below). First we tested to see if Lawrence's *Mind War* affected Wai's Farseer, which it did, stripping a third power off him and also leaving him with just *Mind War* in his hand! Finally, Lawrence rolled the dreaded D6 to see if his Farseer was dragged off by the *Daemonic Attack*, staring in resigned disbelief as the dice came up with a one and his precious Farseer vanished into the warp!

As Jervis chats with him at half time, Wai guesses his margin of victory.

HALF TIME INTERVIEWS

With the battle halfway through we decided to take a brief time-out. This allowed the players a bit of a rest to recharge, and gave Ian a chance to go over his notes and maps and make himself a cup of tea (he's very partial to a cup of tea and a biccy is our Ian). It also gave me the opportunity to chat to Lawrence and Wai about how things were going so far…

LAWRENCE'S CHAT

JJ: Well, one has to say that things aren't looking terribly good at the moment Lawrence…

LW: Aaaaaargh! (laughs) No, it's not going very well. My first turn was abysmal, I only killed four models, but that was partly because I didn't think

properly in my first turn. I had a plan and I changed it. I should have gone for an all-out offensive against his Farseer, like I wanted to, using the Warp Spiders as well.

JJ: Losing your own Farseer was a blow.

LW: Yes, my Farseer dying… Help! With hindsight I'd have used *Energy Drain* instead of *Ultimate Force*, because I knew he had *Daemonic Attack*. A one-in-three chance to get sucked into the warp is too risky.

(*In Lawrence's defence I should say that he, along with many other players, has always assumed that you can't use* Daemonic Attack *against a power cast with* Ultimate Force. *This isn't actually correct as* Daemonic Attack can *be used, but it doesn't nullify the power, it simply means there is a chance of the psyker that used it is dragged off to the warp! When I revealed the awful truth to Lawrence he happily accepted the ruling, rolled his dice and got a one!*)

LW: What can I say… I've not played this quite the way I normally play. I normally go out on the offensive and I haven't done that this game, I've sat back a bit. I think my game plan for the second half will be just to charge, which I should have been doing from the first turn. And I have to do something drastic about his Farseer, because otherwise he's just going to start frying my guys.

JJ: Any other options?

LW: Well, my last Jetbike is about to crash, and when it does that I've got the *Reinforcements* strategy card which will allow me to bring them back on, which'll help and could make a big difference. Then there's Jain Zar, she really should be dead, getting hit by three Warp Spiders and she's still alive! With the Jetbikes coming back on I'm just going to target everything at her, she can't survive that sort of firepower. My Banshee Exarch should have been out at the front from the start, she's spent two turns running about in cover, she should have gone forward – she's got a *Displacer Field*, so she should be quite safe from attack. The only thing is if I go forward he's going to fry her with *Mind War* unless I can do something about the Farseer. I think I'm going to send my Warp Spiders to try and get him. I think I have to. Still we learn by our mistakes. Damn, damn, damn…

WAI'S HALF TIME REPORT

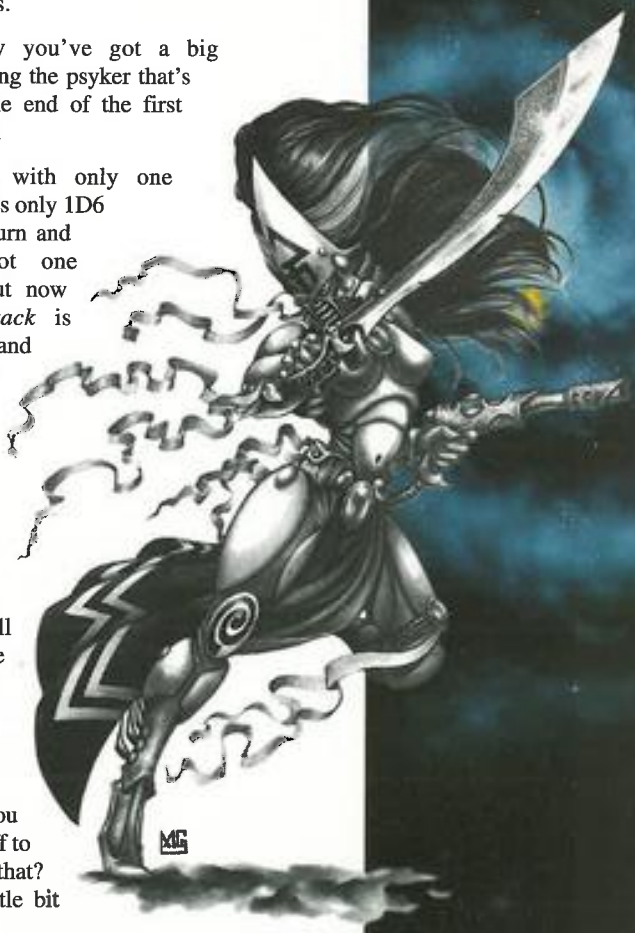
JJ: Well, I've now brought Wai over to speak about how he feels about things, which I assume is rather more cheerful than Lawrence. How do you think things are going?

WL: Everything's going well, obviously. I've inflicted a lot more casualties, and he was unlucky with his Farseer, and everything's going fairly well. But I wouldn't put Lawrence out of it yet because he can still pull it back with a couple of good dice rolls. But I'm in the lead, and I just have to guard that. Other than that, everything's gone to plan, although he's done a lot of things differently to the way I would. He moved his Warp Spiders into the bunker, I thought he would make a determined charge and he didn't. But apart from that everything's going to plan and I just have to hang on to my lead and not take too many casualties.

Deep in thought, Farseer Widdicombe attempts to locate the threads of fate that will ensure him victory and one of the greatest second half comebacks in history.

JJ: Obviously you've got a big advantage having the psyker that's left alive at the end of the first couple of turns.

WL: Though with only one psyker left that's only 1D6 warp cards a turn and I've only got one power left. But now *Daemonic Attack* is out of the way and he can't use any of the other special cards, and nullifies will only work on a 5 or 6, which means he's pretty bad psychically. I'll see what he does in the next turn, and then take a cautious, happy attitude.



JJ: Why did you send Jain Zar off to the flank like that? She looks a little bit exposed to me.

"Well, one has to say that things aren't looking terribly good at the moment Lawrence..."

WL: Well, she's either going to get targeted by the Warp Spiders or he's going to go after my Farseer, it's either one or the other. If he goes after her he'll need sixes to hit her, and she's only worth 2 VPs compared to 7 VPs for the Farseer, so he's more likely to go for him. But if he goes after her, there's no point having an intervening squad, because the Warp Spiders will catch her anyway. Apart from the Warp Spiders there's only the Scorpions and Banshees over there, and I think the Banshees are out of charge range. Also the move freed her up to use the *Silent Death*.

JJ: Great, I was just interested in why you did it. Anyway, back to the fray!

LAWRENCE TURN 3

JJ: Lawrence's third turn started well, his riderless Jetbike crashing into a wall and being destroyed, which would allow him to use the *Reinforcements* strategy card in his final turn to bring the entire squadron back on! This aside, Lawrence had clearly decided that "the best form of defence is a good offence"! On his right he charged his Striking Scorpions and Howling Banshee Exarch against Wai's Guardians, with his Howling Banshee squad moving up in support. His Warp Spiders teleported past the melee to attack Wai's Farseer and his attendant Guardian squad. On his left flank, the Swooping Hawks took to the air, flying over the Guardians on the hill, dropping a hail of frag grenades as they did so. Lawrence's final moves were to advance his Dire Avengers and scatter laser in support of the other troops.

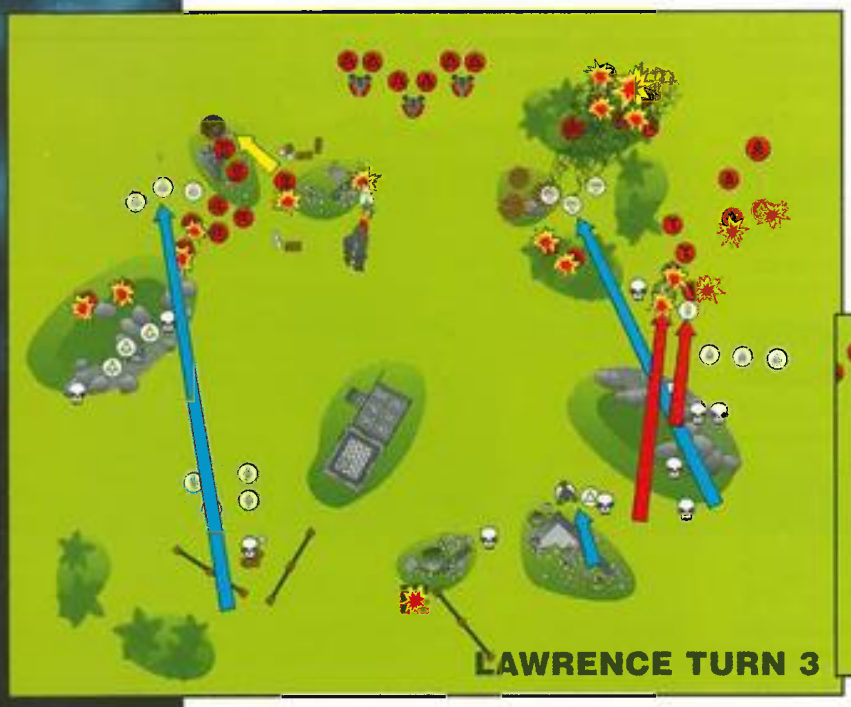
Wai's troops suffered badly from Lawrence's renewed assault. On Lawrence's left the staff champion's Guardians and Swooping Hawks killed over half of Wai's Guardians on the hill. Next, Lawrence's Dire Avengers managed to pick off one of Wai's Fire Dragons, which resulted in the Fire Dragon squad breaking! On the right, the Warp Spiders managed to wipe out the Guardians protecting the Farseer, although the Farseer himself emerged unscathed. Finally, the Howling Banshees moving up in support of the Striking Scorpions were able to take down two of their opposite numbers in Wai's army.

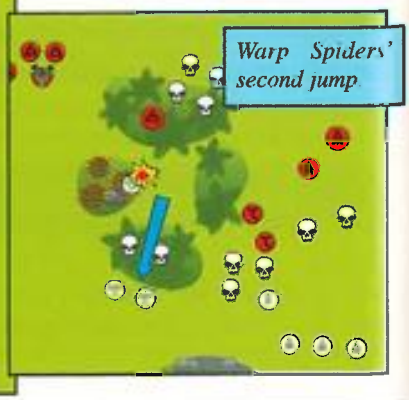
Before close combat took place, the Warp Spiders made a second jump, moving away from the Farseer and back towards their own side's troops. Unfortunately, another of the Warp Spiders died as a result of the jump, and the survivors failed the resulting break test for suffering 25% casualties. Things didn't get much better for Lawrence in the close combat phase, and he only managed to kill two of the Guardians he had charged. To make matters worse, in the following psychic phase Wai's Farseer was able to kill off the Banshee Exarch with *Mind War*. Still, there was no doubting that Lawrence had started to wrestle back the initiative. The question was, could he hold on to it?

WAI TURN 3

Determined to keep the stranglehold he had developed so far, Wai launched an immediate counter-attack against Lawrence's late offensive. His Farseer and an unengaged Guardian charged the Warp Spiders who, being already broken, were forced to flee rather than fight. Next, Jain Zar and single surviving Howling Banshee charged, the Howling Banshee attacking a Striking Scorpion, and the Phoenix Lord one of Lawrence's Howling Banshees.

In the shooting phase, Wai's support battery opened up on Lawrence's Dire Avengers, killing three of them and breaking the squad. Two of Wai's surviving Guardians turned to fire at the Swooping Hawks, and the remaining Guardian and one of the crewmen from the support battery shot at Lawrence's Guardians in cover on the hill.





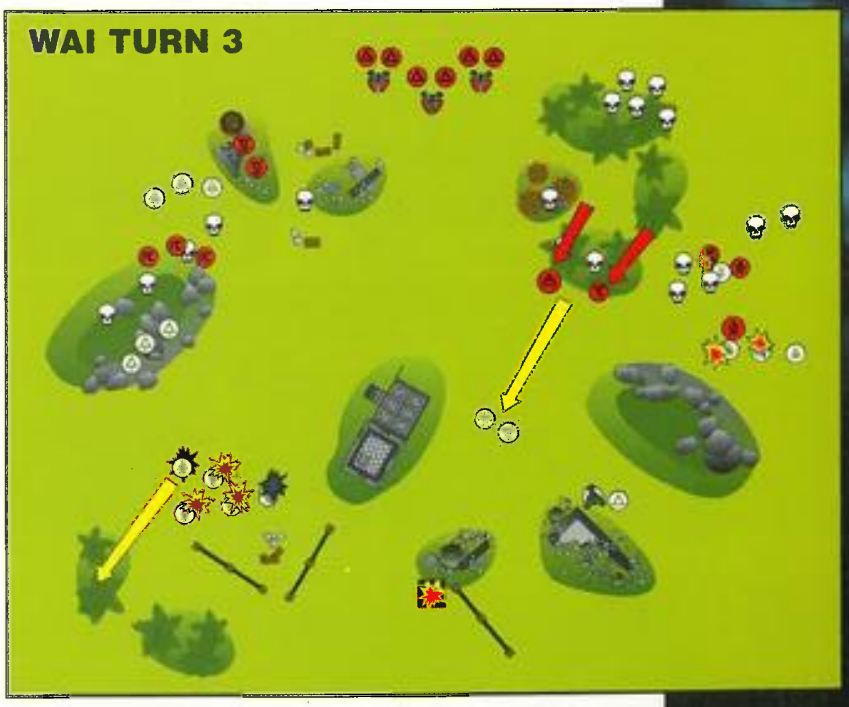
Squads of Howling Banshees from both opposing Craftworlds engage in a deadly firefight before closing in for the kill!

However, the only effect of this last fire was that the support battery crewman managed to jam his shuriken catapult!

Close combat was as ineffective for Wai as it had been for Lawrence. Although Jain Zar managed to kill her opponent and bounded into combat with the last of Lawrence's Howling Banshees, Wai's own surviving Howling Banshee and the Guardian helping her attack Lawrence's Striking Scorpion both failed to cause any damage, even though the Striking Scorpion had been paralysed by the Banshee's mask. What's more, the Guardian managed to roll three ones and died in the attack!

The psychic phase was equally disappointing, Wai's Farseer only managing to kill one of Lawrence's Banshees with *Mind War*. Last, but by no means least, the presence of Lawrence's Swooping Hawks as the closest models meant that the broken Fire Dragon squad was unable to rally at the end of the turn (a squad can't rally if the enemy are closer than friendly unbroken troops).

(As an aside, the charge by the Howling Banshee on the Striking Scorpions raised some questions about mandiblasters and banshee masks. Neither player was sure if the Striking Scorpion could use them after the first round of combat, and even if he could, whether he would be allowed to use them against a charging Howling Banshee. I told Wai and Lawrence that mandiblasters can normally *be used in any round of combat, but we decided between us that when charged by a Howling Banshee they can't be fired, as even models in overwatch can't fire under such circumstances.)*



Lawrence's Warp Spiders looked like they might dominate the battle. However, against the agile Eldar they proved to be less of a threat than normal.

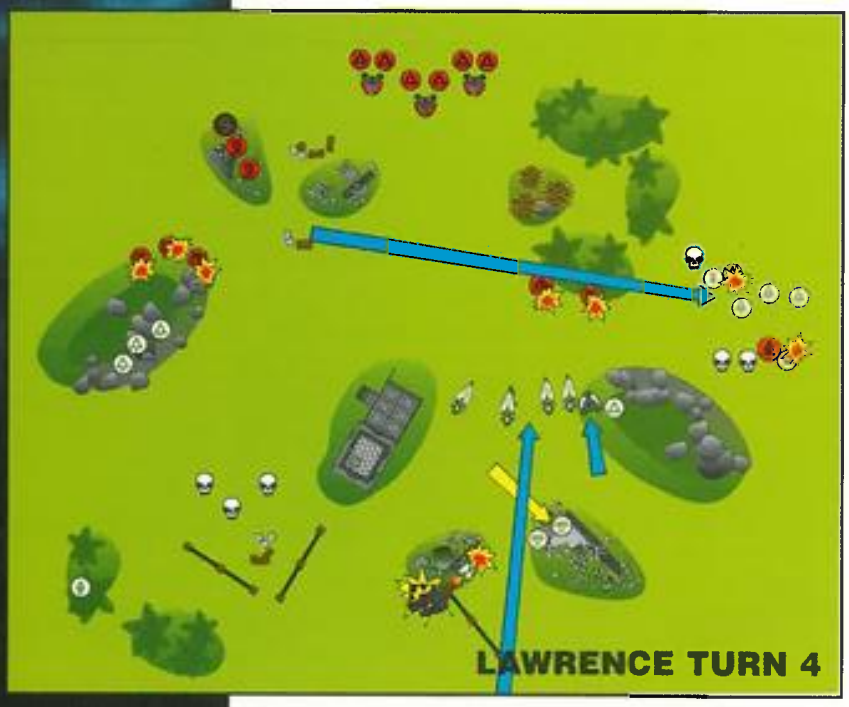
LAWRENCE TURN 4

As we entered the final pair of turns, both players were well aware that the game hung very much in the balance. Lawrence's third turn, while not being quite as good as he'd hoped, had brought him back into the game and with some luck he could even pull off a win. Helping him in this was the strategy card that he'd been holding since the start of the battle (*Reinforcements*) – which he now played to bring back his Jetbike squadron!

Lawrence's Jetbikes screamed on to the table, but he'd forgotten about the *Booby Traps* Wai had revealed on the first turn, and the newly arrived Jetbikes flew straight over them! Much to Lawrence's chagrin one of riders was killed, sending his bike out of control. The rather surprised survivors carried on, closely followed by Lawrence's scatter laser.

Next the three Swooping Hawks swept up into the air and flew straight across the battlefield. They dropped krak grenades on Wai's Farseer as they went, wounding him twice with their aerial attack. Wai was able to save one of the hits, but the other got past all of the Farseer's protection. All Lawrence needed to kill the Farseer was a 4 or more… and he rolled a 2! The Farseer was badly wounded by the attack, but not dead!

However, Lawrence had not yet finished shooting. His scatter laser opened up, blasting the unlucky Guardian that was the closest target with 6 shots and leaving him very dead indeed! This left the four Jetbikes with but one target – Wai's already wounded Farseer. All four opened up at the psyker, but this time the Farseer's armour saved him against all damage and he emerged unscathed. Lawrence ground his teeth in frustration – would *nothing* kill that Farseer?



On the other flank, Lawrence's Guardians wiped out their opposite numbers on the hill. Then, in the close combat phase, the Striking Scorpion who had miraculously survived a Howling Banshee's charge finished the job by cutting her down with his chainsword. On the other hand, Jain Zar managed to easily despatch the last of Lawrence's Howling Banshees, who she had engaged with her follow-up move last turn.

The turn ended with Lawrence rolling a six to nullify the *Mind War* Wai played on the Striking Scorpion.

WAI TURN4

And so we came to the last turn. Lawrence's failure to kill the Farseer (though not for want of trying!) meant that it was clear that Wai had won the game. It was only a question of by what margin.

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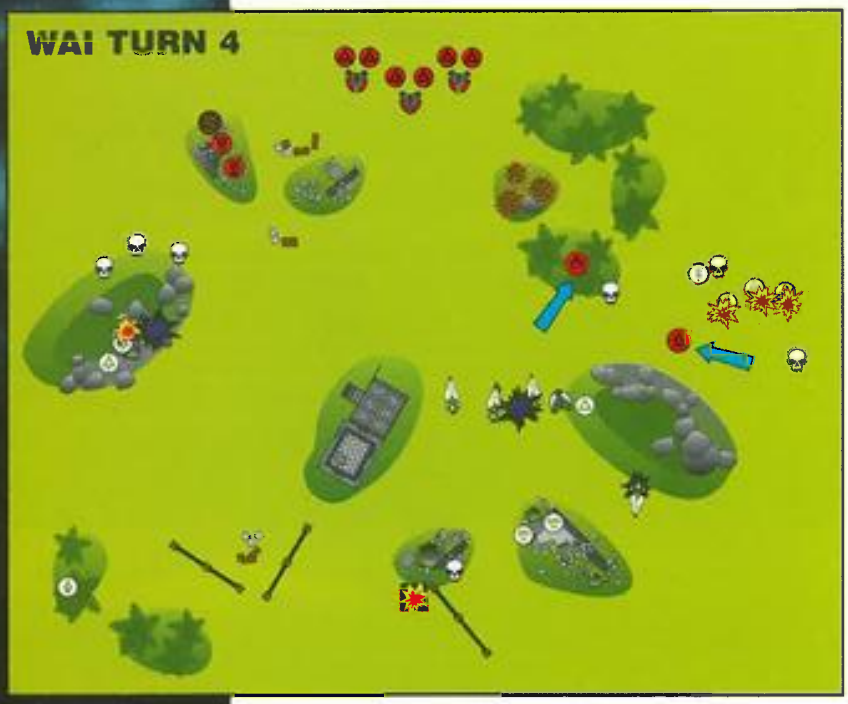
More of the Biel-tan Jetbikes arrive upon a hostile battlefield to find there is very little left of their army left to reinforce!

Not wishing to risk any of his troops in close combat, especially against the heroic Striking Scorpion who had seen off a double charge by a Howling Banshee and a close combat Guardian, Wai stood back and fired. The D-cannon in his support battery ripped into the Jetbike reinforcements, destroying two and displacing and inverting a third, which we decided counted as a kill. It seemed to us that being flipped upside down while riding a Jetbike would be a fairly terminal experience! Wai's scatter laser picked off one of Lawrence's Guardians on the hill to the left, but the squad passed the resulting break test. Jain Zar finished off the shooting by taking out all three Swooping Hawks with a single decapitating throw of the *Silent Death!*

The final act of the battle was a last *Mind War* attack by Wai's Farseer on the heroic Striking Scorpion, which again was nullified, this time with a roll of a five. Clearly this Eldar was a future Exarch in the making! However, this was small recompense for Lawrence, who had been offered the chance of victory at the start of his final turn, only to have his hopes dashed. Wai, on the other hand, was able to sit back an breath a sigh of relief – he'd done it! He had become the first ever Supreme Warhammer 40,000 Champion!



FINAL VICTORY POINT TOTALS

Wai – 21

Lawrence – 13

POST-BATTLE

As the dust died down on the bloodied battlefield, I took the two opposing commanders to one side for a quick chat about the way things had finally worked out.

JJ: This is the post-battle discussion, so… talk!

LW: If my Warp Spiders had rallied, and my Farseer hadn't died… I can't believe it, two rally tests and I failed both!

WL: That's the hard thing, when you start rolling sixes it can be a bad thing. It's just one of those things, you just can't help it. Now my Fire Dragons, they spent two turns doing nothing! They could have wiped out your Guardians, that would have been another victory point.

Wai and Lawrence congratulate each other on a battle well fought. It was a good, hard scrap, and when a game is fun there are no real losers.

LW: Yeah, even if your Farseer had died, you'd have still won by one, wouldn't you?

JJ: That's right, it would have been a lot closer, wouldn't it? The thing was with those krak grenades you were quite lucky right up to the point you had to roll the wounds for them. It's so typical of Warhammer 40,000. It's kind of like it sucks you in, you think "Yes! Yes!", and then you just go "Urgh!"

LW: That's right. Four or more and he's dead! (everybody laughs). And if he'd died it would have allowed the Jetbikes to shoot up other targets, like the support platforms in the distance, and that would have been more victory points.

JJ: It was a very bloody conflict.

LW: It was. Apart from my first turn. My first turn was terrible. My third turn I actually started to kill things 'cos I went back to my original plan of just going straight forward.

WL: I was surprised you didn't do that in the first turn. I was expecting you to do that.

LW: Yes, it's what I normally do and it was my plan, but I looked at it and I thought "If I go over there then that's going to die, and if I go over there then that's going to die". I should have stuck with the plan.

WL: I know, but it's scary playing against another Eldar army, because you know what it can do to you!

At this point several members of Studio staff appeared wanting to know the result, so I decided to draw the interview to a close.

CONCLUSION

JJ: Well, Lawrence and Wai's battle had been hard-fought and very bloody, and although the two player's scores were quite widely separated it could have been very different if Lawrence had enjoyed a bit more luck on his final turn. This being said, Wai thoroughly deserved his win. He fully exploited the strengths of his version of the Eldar army compared to Lawrence's, holding back and exploiting the superior firepower of his force to the maximum. Once he'd got his lead he tenaciously defended it, rather than resting on his laurels as many players might have done after such a start.

Lawrence, for his part, paid a high price for a slow first turn and was trying to catch up from that point on. However, he never gave up, even when things looked very bleak at the end of the second turn, and by the fourth turn with the arrival of his reinforcement Jetbikes it looked like the tide was turning in his favour. Although it didn't quite work out for him, Lawrence's heroic fight-back showed why he'd triumphed in the Staff tournament, and how he earned his reputation for being a tough opponent to beat.

So, congratulations are in order to both players for a magnificent performance. At the end of the day though, it was Wai Lam who came away the victor and special congratulations are in order to him for becoming the first *ever* Supreme Warhammer 40,000 World Champion!

Wai and Lawrence thought Ian might be distracted by thoughts of more tea and biccies, but his roving camera managed to catch their reactions to the final result (sorry guys!).

Wai and Lawrence "chew the fat" with Jervis and discuss the ups and the downs of the battle (no, they're not playing Blood Bowl).

WARHAMMER 40,000

KNEEL BEFORE ME!

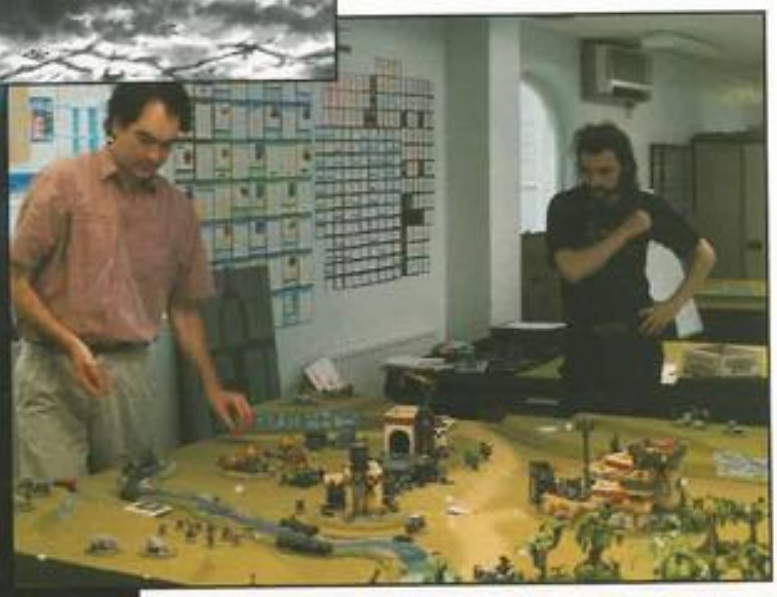
By Andy Chambers and Jervis Johnson

CHAOS COMES TO THRUGGOPOLIS

Andy: Chaos is everywhere since the release of Codex Chaos – coming up through the drains, behind the wallpaper, in the back of drawers (damn it, this just isn't working… start again).

Ahem. In order to show you some of the natty stuff that the forces of Chaos can get up to in Warhammer 40,000 since Codex Chaos hit the streets, we decided to fight a battle report. It's a bit of a tradition for me and Jervis to play each other in battle reports (and for Jerv to lose) so, as we also worked on Codex Chaos together, we both "volunteered" for the job.

Of course, both Jervis and I have been spotted burbling on about playing narrative campaigns and using powerful special characters in appropriate scenarios in several recent White Dwarfs. This set us thinking that we really ought to back up our claims by doing an appropriate scenario for the Chaos battle report. But fortunately (heh, heh) we had one prepared earlier…



ABADDON'S CRUSADE

Over the course of writing Codex Chaos, Jervis and I played a loose narrative campaign to put our playtest games into some kind of context. We used the campaign to fight an escalating series of battles which depicted Abaddon leading a Black Crusade out of the Eye of Terror. He planned to use an enslaved Chaos Sorcerer to navigate through the warpstorms at the fringes of the Eye and avoid using the Cadian Gate. The first battle we fought was around 300 points a side and depicted the Chaos Space Marines attempting to silence an Imperial outpost on the backwater world of Arx so that Abaddon's fleet could move into the Imperium undetected.

Khorne Berzerkers (and their summoned Bloodletters) were dispatched for the job and killed the garrison, but failed to kill the resident Astropath – the Imperium received some vague warnings of impeding doom. Subsequently the crusade raided an Industrial world and used Plague Marines to infect it before disappearing into Ork-controlled space. I had just written up Abaddon the Despoiler by this point, and Jervis pointed out that if we were going to use the "Warmaster of Chaos" it ought to be in an appropriate scenario, not a 1500 point free-for-all.

We concocted a story based around a recalcitrant Ork Warlord who was defying Abaddon. Abaddon decided to teleport down to his encampment to bring the Warlord to heel in person by defeating him in hand-to-hand combat, thus proving his power in a way that even Orks could

easily understand. In the game, we had the Warboss and a portion of his forces starting off on the table, with the rest of his Warband arriving as reinforcements. Abaddon was accompanied by a force of Chaos Space Marines (he's not stupid) and had some daemonic allies lurking in the warp waiting to be summoned.

In the game itself Abaddon teleported down reasonably close to the Ork Warboss, but his Chaos Space Marines were scattered more widely. This proved to be only a slight problem as Abaddon soon hunted down the Warboss (hacking his way through mega-armoured Nobz and Gretchin assistants en route) while his Chaos Space Marines and daemonic minions kept the rest of the Orks busy. The game was a good laugh and we concluded afterwards that Abaddon should always be able to teleport into battle if he wanted to, as it made a suitably dramatic entry for such a powerful character (well, a bit of drama never hurt anybody!).

When we came to do this battle report we decided to re-fight the "Warboss" scenario. Because it isn't a standard kind of game we've written it up slightly differently, merging the turns together in some places to make it flow more like the game did, (on some turns little happened, but on others all hell broke loose and we'll try to reflect that). We've stuck with our normal practice of taking photos during the game and then setting up the miniatures again later so that we can take photos with decent lights, proper cameras, etc. That's why there aren't any coffee mugs, dice, rulebooks, tape measures (or indeed players!) in the shots.

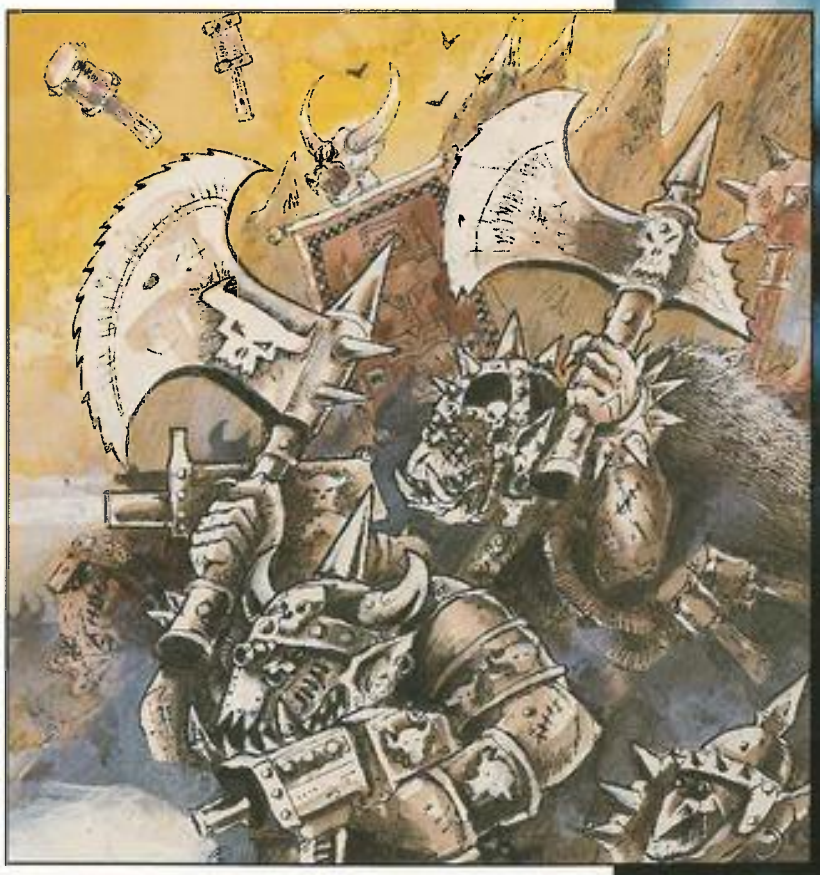
TECHNICAL STUFF

The Chaos Space Marine force is 1500 points strong, chosen from the delectable Studio Chaos Space Marine army. The Ork force totals up to 2000 points, but only 750 points starts in the village (including the Warboss, of course). To prevent the Orks being too clumped together, Jervis had to place his units at least 12" apart – the idea being that the Orks were just going about their daily business and not expecting a horde of power armoured psychopaths to turn up. The other units of Orks would enter as reinforcements, as we assumed they were out foraging, buggy racing, hunting escaped squigs and so on.

Each turn, Jervis determined if the foraging Orks returned to find out what all the ruckus in the village was about, by rolling a D6 and adding the turn number for each unit. A total of 7 or more meant they showed up at a random point along a table edge which was determined by rolling a scatter dice in the middle of the table. No Strategy cards were used as most of them were inappropriate to the scenario. All this stuff is summarised later on so if you fancy having a crack at Thrugg's Doom you can – why not write in and let us know how you get on?

The victory conditions for both sides were as follows. If Abaddon killed the Warboss in hand-to-hand combat, the forces of Chaos would win immediately. If the Warboss moved off a table edge he would be deemed to have escaped and the Orks would win immediately. In either case, the game would finish at that point with victory going to the appropriate side. Initially we wanted to play the game with no turn limit at all, but eventually we decided that time constraints meant it would be best to play six turns. Then, if neither side had fulfilled their main objective, the winner would be the side which had gained the most victory points by inflicting casualties (using the tables in the Dark Millennium supplement).

" ...bring the Warlord to heel in person by defeating him in hand-to-hand combat, thus proving his power in a way that even Orks could easily understand."



CHOOSING THE ORKS

Jervis: Choosing the Ork army was remarkably straightforward as I'd already got a list from the first time we'd played the battle. As this was safely stored away on my computer at work it saved me from having to pick the army from scratch. When I'd first chosen the army it had been for a fun scenario rather than a fiercely competitive battle report (where honour is at stake…), so my starting point had been to pick an army more along the lines of "what kind of stuff would you find in an Ork village" than "what items will give me the greatest chance of victory". Picking an army in this way is a lot of fun and I'd recommend giving it a try.

But I digress. When I originally picked it, I wanted the Ork army to include as much different stuff as possible in order to reflect the colourful and varied nature of the Ork background. I therefore included all the different sorts of Oddboy, as you'd expect to find at least one of each type in a village, some Nobz and Boyz from the Warboss' clan (Bad Moons) and lots of Gretchin. To this I added a selection of Ork field artillery and a whole bunch of bikes, buggies and other Ork vehicles, without either of which no Ork army would be complete. To add a bit of variety I included some Deathskull Lootas and some Ork Freebooterz, reasoning that they were visiting the village to make a deal with the Ork Warlord and ended up getting caught up in the fight. Finally, I seasoned the mix with a smattering of wargear cards, taking care *not* to include things that might spoil the game, no matter how tempting they might be to take (there would've been no point in playing the scenario at all if I'd taken a *Teleport Jammer*, for example!)

And voila! The army was complete, well, almost. The final stage I go through when creating an army is naming all of the characters and units. This gives them a bit more depth, and it really is much more fun to say something like "Kaptin Skumdreg an' his Freebooter Wreckin' Krew let 'em have it wiv everything day've got!" than "The Freebooterz shoot at those Space Marines, don'tcha know… ". When naming the units and characters I'll often search for inspiration amongst our old Warhammer 40,000 publications, and some of our older readers may well recognise the name of the leader of the Ork army as an Ork character with a long and infamous pedigree! *(There's a prize for the first reader to write in, telling us where Thrugg first appeared. Answers on a postcard to Jervis Johnson at the Studio – Ed)*

It was while I was naming the characters and units that I decided it would be nice if I could upgrade one of the crew of the Ork vehicles to a Nob. This isn't actually allowed in Codex Orks, but it just didn't seem right to have all those vehicles zooming about without anybody to lead them. Fortunately, Andy was happy to go along with this as a house rule for the battle, and so I upgraded the gunner on the Wartrak to a Nob (I chose him as he looked like the bossiest of all the crew members in the unit!).

So, the army being pretty much pre-chosen, all I had to worry about was my set up. First of all I had to split the army into two groups, one starting in the village, the rest out foragin'. I knew that Thrugg and his retinue had to start in the village, and as it would clearly have been silly for the field artillery to be out foragin', I deployed Da Laddo's Dead-Good Shooty Stuff in the village. Next, I added Wazmek and Gazza, mainly because we'd gone to the trouble of setting up a Mekaniak's workshop as part of the terrain in the village. This left me with very few points left to play with, but after a bit of fiddling with my list I was able to arrange things so that I could take Doc Snazbitz and Kaptin Skumdreg with his Wreckin' Krew, and a mob of 10 Gretchin. The rest of the army was out and about in the surrounding jungle.

Setting up the troops was very simple. I first deployed Thrugg and his retinue, placing them in the most out of the way place possible. Next I

THRUGG'S DOOM

Pick a 2,000 point army. No special characters are allowed, but apart from that there are no restrictions. The game table is set up to represent an Ork village. The playing area needs to be at least 4' square, but if you have a larger table, so much the better.

The Ork player may set up units with a total points value of up to 750 points on the table. One of these units must be the Ork Warboss. The Warboss is set up first, anywhere that is more than 20" from a table edge. Models from the remaining Ork units can be set up anywhere on the table that is 12" from any Ork unit *other than the Warboss.*

All the remaining Ork units are out foragin'. The Ork player rolls a D6 for each of these units at the end of each of his turns, adding the turn number to the dice roll. On a roll of 7+ the unit arrives back somewhere along the edge of the table. Roll a Scatter dice in the centre of the table to determine where the unit arrives and set it up within 4" of the edge of the table at that point. If *no* units arrive in a turn the Ork player may pick one to turn up.

Note, in the game itself we decided that Uznob's Evil Sunz bikers should randomly determine one of the three roads which head into the village as their entry point. This seemed appropriate and prevented them crashing into any trees or rocks when they arrived.

Thrugg Bullnek: Bad Moon Warboss with Ork 'eavy armour, power glove, *Kustom Blasta*, and a *Kustom Force Field*.

Thrugg's Retinue: Three Bad Moon Nobz in mega-armour with power claws/fists, one with a bolter, one with a plasma gun, and one armed with a flamer.

Oddgit: Bad Moon Weirdboy Warphead with four Minders. Oddgit has a *Weirdboy Staff*.

Dok Snazbitz: Bad Moon Painboy in Ork 'eavy armour, with a power fist and chainsword. Snazbitz has two Gretchin assistants, **Finditz** and **Fetchitz.** Finditz is a Champion.

Wazmek: Evil Sun Mekaniak, with *Mekboy's Tools*. Wazmek has a Gretchin assistant, **Gazza.**

Magteef's 'Ardboyz, Deathskull Mob: Magteef is a Deathskull Nob, armed with a chainsword, and carrying a *Vortex Grenade*.
Da 'Ardboyz are 5 Deathskulls all armed with kustom kombi-weapons.

Kaptin Skumdreg's Wreckin' Krew: Kaptin Skumdreg, Freebooter Kaptin, armed with a chainsword and *Kustom Blasta*, and carrying a *Kustom Force Field*
Da Wreckin' Krew are five Freebooter Pirates, one with a lascannon.

Nazbog's Mob, Bad Moon Boyz Mob: Nazbog, Bad Moon Bigboss, in Ork 'eavy armour, equipped with a power fist, *Buzzer Squig Stikkbomb*, and *Combat Drugs*.
The Boyz, ten Bad Moons with bolters and krak grenades, one with a lascannon and one armed with an autocannon.

Uznob's Evil Sunz Bikers:
Uznob, Evil Sunz Nob, Jerv's special character – rides on a Wartrak, and has a *Bionic Eye*.
Da Bikers: five Evil Sunz on Warbikes.
Da Buggies: one Evil Sunz Buggy and one Evil Sunz Wartrak Scorcher.

Runtnark and his Laddos: Snakebite Runtherd, with *Runtherd's Grabba-stick*. Runtnark is accompanied by two Gretchin assistants, **Wallace** and **Gromit**. Gromit carries Runtnark's supply of frag and krak grenades.
Runtnark's Laddos are 30 Gretchin with assorted weapons (may be split up into mobs of ten or more models before the battle).

Da Laddos Dead-Good Shooty Stuff:
Smasha Gun, Squig Katapult,
Splatta Kannon, and Traktor Kannon

deployed the Dead-Good Shooty Stuff, which Andy kindly let me set up as single units rather than a battery, so that I could spread them around to defend the perimeter of the town (we both agreed it would be silly for all of the weapons to have to set up together for this scenario). Wazmek and Gazza were placed in their workshop – where else would they be? – while the Gretchin, Doc Snazbitz and Kaptin Skumdreg were squeezed in as close as I could get them to Thrugg without setting them up somewhere silly or inappropriate. My final deployment is shown on the accompanying map and in the photos included with this article, and a lovely picture of Orky tranquillity it created too. For the few minutes before Abaddon turned up, at least...

PICKIN' A FIGHT

Andy: I bet you're thinking "Aha, now Andy's going to show me how to pick all the best bits for a Chaos Space Marine force". Well, no actually. The force I picked is rather unusual for a number of reasons. Firstly, the new Chaos Space Marine miniatures are still being made and so, for example, Brian Nelson's gorgeous new Chaos Sorcerers haven't been painted yet. Jervis suggested I use one of the Chaos Sorcerers from our Warhammer Chaos army as a substitute, but I didn't like the idea. Ordinarily I wouldn't be caught dead without a Sorcerer to give me psychic support, but I consoled myself with the thought that I would be able to spend more points on troops instead.

Secondly, I picked the Chaos Space Marine squads I liked the best, rather than the ones I knew would be most effective. I also tried to limit myself to squads from as few different Legions as possible so that the raiding force wouldn't look like too much of a hotch-potch affair. Basically, because we were playing a characterful scenario I wanted to use a characterful force. On the other hand, I *did* ensure I took a squad of the new Chaos Terminators and equipped one of them with a reaper autocannon! I also considered taking a Champion of Khorne riding a Juggernaut because the new model is so exceptionally brutal-looking and I thought I might need a fast-moving battering ram. However, at the end of the day I couldn't really imagine teleporting in a Champion on a Juggernaut so I decided to save him for another time.

The Chaos Space Marines I picked comprised Abaddon and his bodyguard of four Black Legion Terminators, a squad of five Black Legionnaires in power armour, a squad of five Plague Marines, a squad of three Night Lords Chaos Terminators and a squad of three Night Lords in power armour with heavy weapons.

DAEMON WORSHIP

One thing I wasn't going to miss out on was having some daemons lurking in the warp to summon up during the game. In the course of play-testing the stuff for the Chaos Codex, one of the new things I liked best was the way that you can use Champions or squads marked by the gods of Chaos to summon daemons. You choose the daemons as part of your force, but you don't deploy them until you've accumulated enough summoning points. The way you get summoning points varies from one god to another, so, for example, Khorne – the Lord of Battles grants summoning points for striking blows in hand-to-hand combat, while Tzeentch – the Great Sorcerer grants summoning points for Force cards expended on psychic powers, and so on.

Though it sounds like a disadvantage to wait before you get to deploy your daemons, it's actually an advantage because daemons are superlative at hand-to-hand combat and useless at everything else. If you pick your moment right, you can summon them up just in time to charge straight in hand-to-hand combat. This saves them from being shot up as they advance and allows you to surprise your opponent by suddenly overwhelming part of his force with a horde of daemonic unpleasantness!

There are, of course, a number of catches. You have to accumulate enough summoning points to get the daemons into play (this is particularly tricky with Khorne as it takes a turn or two to get to grips with the enemy). The daemons have to be summoned within 6" of a model with the right mark of Chaos for the daemon's god – so you have to get *him* to the right place instead. Some of the Chaos gods hate and despise one another so their daemons will fight each other if they're summoned to the same battlefield. Finally, if all of the models with the daemons' mark of Chaos are killed the daemons lose their link to the physical universe and disappear back to the Realm of Chaos immediately!

Daemons of Nurgle: 6 Plaguebearers and 3 stands of Nurglings.

Abaddon: Abaddon is accompanied by 4 Black Guard in Terminator armour

The Night Watch: 3 Chaos Terminators, one with a reaper autocannon

Squad Apollyon: 3 Chaos Space Marines, one with a heavy bolter, one with missile launcher and plasma missiles.

Squad Morte: 4 Plague Marines, led by an Aspiring Champion of Chaos

Squad Kaon: 4 Chaos Space Marines, led by an Aspiring Champion of Chaos

I had already decided to take a squad of Plague Marines, Chaos Space Marines that have been marked by Nurgle, Lord of Decay. Abaddon also bears the marks of *all* the Chaos gods from the various infernal pacts he's made. This made a pack of Nurgle daemons, Plaguebearers, a natural choice as I would have greater flexibility when I chose to summon them. The Plague Marines supplied a sturdy link for the daemons to exploit and as long as Abaddon was alive he could also supply the link to the physical realm the daemons needed. If Abaddon was lost then the game was lost anyway. The other plus was that Nurgle daemons are straightforward to gain summoning points for – each Wound inflicted on the foe accumulates one Nurgle summoning point, two if it's inflicted by a model with the mark of Nurgle. I chose to include six Plaguebearers in my force, I would need twelve summoning points to get them into play, but I could summon them as two groups of three if I wanted (the minimum you need to summon at one time). The Plaguebearers would also supply me with some daemonic psychic powers once they were summoned.

FINISHING TOUCHES

With my main force squared up, I toughened some of the squads by placing Morte, an Aspiring Chaos Champion of Nurgle, in command of the Plague Marines. Kaon, another Aspiring Champion, was to command the Black Legion power armour squad. I gave Morte the Chaos reward *Cloud of Flies* to give him an edge in close combat, and I equipped Kaon with plasma grenades and a *Stasis Grenade* which he could use to slow down or pin the Ork reinforcements.

This left me with 45 points to spare, which I couldn't resist spending on three Nurgling bases. Nurglings aren't especially dangerous or tough, but there're lots of them, so bases have 3 Wounds each. This, combined with their unmodifiable daemonic saving throw, makes them exceptionally hard to kill. Nurglings are also easier to summon than ordinary daemons, requiring only one summoning point each.

TEETHING PROBLEMS

Jervis set up a splendid Ork village and deployed his forces before I teleported my ravening Chaos horde into battle. Then we set to with gusto.

However, the deviation rolls for my teleporting troops proved to be rather more favourable than last time, and poor old Thrugg immediately found himself completely surrounded by the hordes of Chaos. Abaddon was steaming up behind him like an express train at the head of his Terminator bodyguard and a squad of Plague Marines that were joined by half a dozen summoned Plaguebearers shortly after they appeared.

It didn't take a genius to conclude that Thrugg had but moments to live – not quite the nail-biting battle for survival we were hoping for.

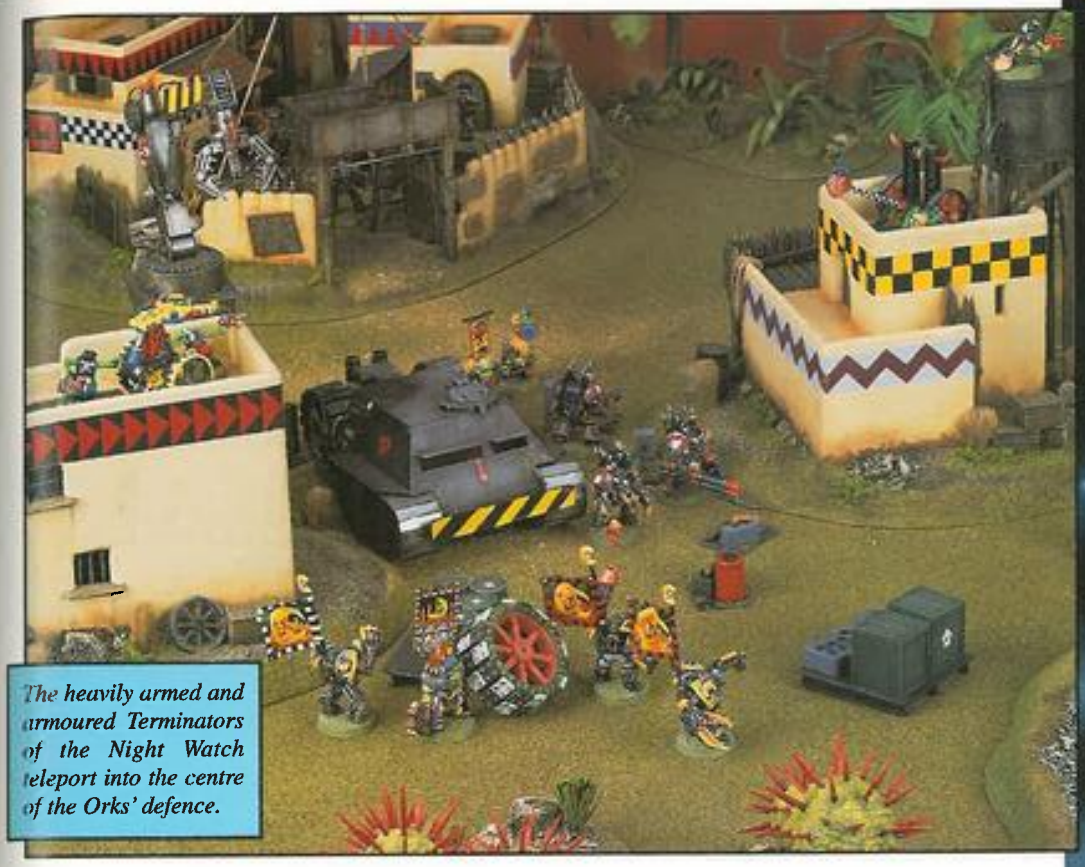
"PREPARE TO TELEPORT..."

We decided that we needed to modify the scenario so that Thrugg had more of a fighting (or running) chance. Once he had persuaded me to stop the game (drat him!) Jervis suggested that I pre-plotted the teleport points for my squads *before* he deployed so that I couldn't take advantage of knowing where Thrugg was when I teleported my damned souls into action.

We tried Jervis' idea and it worked a lot better as I was forced to spread my squads out around the village to ensure that I cut off Thrugg's escape routes. It did throw up another problem in that Abaddon ended up too far away from Thrugg to have any chance of catching him at all. To get around this problem Jervis said I could keep any squads I wanted to in reserve and then plot where to teleport them in at the end of my first turn. This would enable the first squads to arrive to get a fix on Thrugg's location, and then Abaddon could nail him.

Everybody got that? Good. Well this is what *really* happened...

Studying the table for likely teleport points soon made it apparent that I simply didn't have enough squads to form a decent ring around Thruggopolis. The best I could hope to achieve would be to keep Abaddon back and place the other four squads at points where they would be able to support each other. Otherwise the squads would be isolated and probably fall prey to the Orks picking them off one at a time.



The heavily armed and armoured Terminators of the Night Watch teleport into the centre of the Orks' defence.

Aboard the great black battle barge above the planet, ancient engines screamed and power flashed in deadly arcs. The hand-picked squads of the Warmaster's strike force stood tense and ready, their eyes bright in anticipation of the havoc they would wreak below, lips moving silently in prayer to their unspeakable deities.

Abaddon raised his fist in salute, and with a flash they were gone.

I plotted Squad Apollyon to appear on the high ground east of the village where their heavy weapons would command the greatest field of fire. Squad Morte was prepared to appear in the largest cluster of Ork buildings to the south so that they could form a defensive strongpoint covering the road through the village and support the other squads with rapid-firing bolters. If Thrugg made a dash in their direction I would be able to reinforce them with daemons to keep the Warboss tied up until Abaddon arrived. The Night Watch was plotted to arrive near the building with the water tower so that they could cover the open ground towards the river. Squad Kaon planned to appear by the Mekboy's shack so that they could stop Thrugg sneaking off to the north east. These are marked on the deployment map.

FIRST CONTACT

All of the squads were off-target to the south and east, Kaon by the least and Apollyon by the most. An immediate firefight broke out between both these squads and Kaptin Skumdreg's Wreckin' Krew hiding behind some crates and sacks on the east side of the village. Most of the Ork Freebooterz were cut down, but the Kaptin and two of the Boyz got to cover amongst the crates once they had recovered from their initial shock.

Nurgle Champion Morte and his squad had time to bombard the Traktor Kannon above them with blight grenades, crippling its krew before they moved up to the west wall of the compound at the sound of approaching Warbikes and Buggies. From there they sowed further putrescent blight grenades in the road and picked off the distant Splatta Kannon with a well-aimed (and very lucky!) bolter shot.

The Night Watch launched into a gun battle with the mega-armoured Nobz protecting Thrugg, but the mighty armour protecting the

The sounds of battle even penetrated the roar of the Evil Sunz bikes, crashing back through the jungle to find out what was going on...

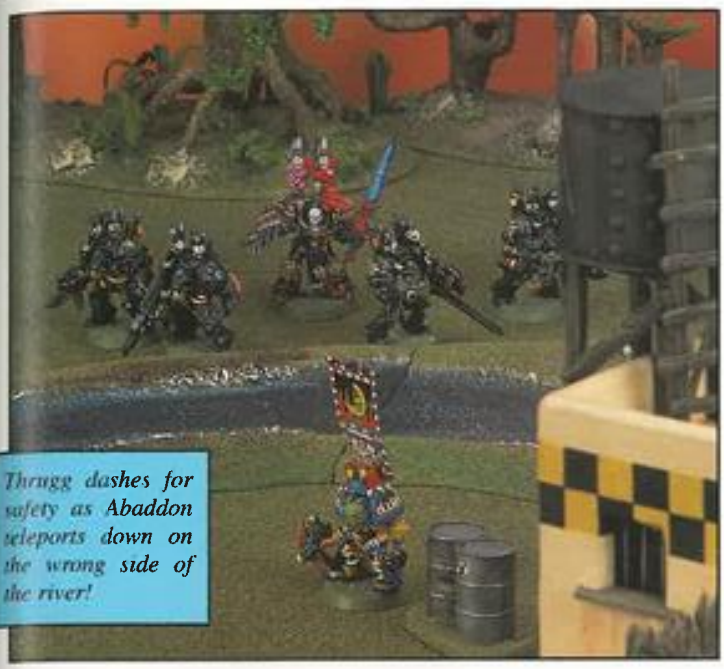
" ...the Night Watch turned their reaper autocannon to bear and laid down a curtain of fire which damaged one Warbike and blasted apart two more, sending them careening wildly out of control... "

combatants prevented any casualties on either side. As the horde of returning Evil Sunz appeared at the far side of the river, the Night Watch turned their reaper autocannon to bear and laid down a curtain of fire which damaged one Warbike and blasted apart two more, sending them careening wildly out of control.

At the start of the second turn, Abaddon and his bodyguard teleported down to head off Thrugg's escape route through the spiker plants, but deviated wildly and ended up on the other side of the river. Their fire against the mega-armoured Nobz was as ineffective as that of the Night Watch. Abaddon ground his teeth in frustration as Thrugg made off in the other direction towards the red painted horde of vehicles that were streaming down the road.

The Evil Sunz gunned their engines and roared into the village, spraying fire wildly at the power armoured figures they could see ducking for cover. A multi-melta blast withered three of the Plague Marines where they stood, and one of Kaon's group was blasted apart by a hail of autocannon shells. The Night Watch's reaper-man survived the slicing beam of a Wartrak lascannon, but as the Gretchin krews started to get more accurate another Night Watchman was consumed by Buzzer Squigs launched from the Squig Katapult. Then another of Kaon's squad was wrenched into the air and slammed down again with bone-breaking force by the Smasha Kannon.

I'd hoped to summon the daemons as one large unit, but I didn't have the summoning points and I had to get more forces to bear. I compromised and summoned up three Plaguebearers and three Nurgling bases across the river from Abaddon, in a position to charge towards the mega Nobz next turn. Jervis responded by bringing on his Deathskull Lootas mob as reinforcements, and the great god Scatter dice brought them wandering on right next to Squad Apollyon...



Thrugg dashes for safety as Abaddon teleports down on the wrong side of the river!

DAEMONS! DAEMONS!

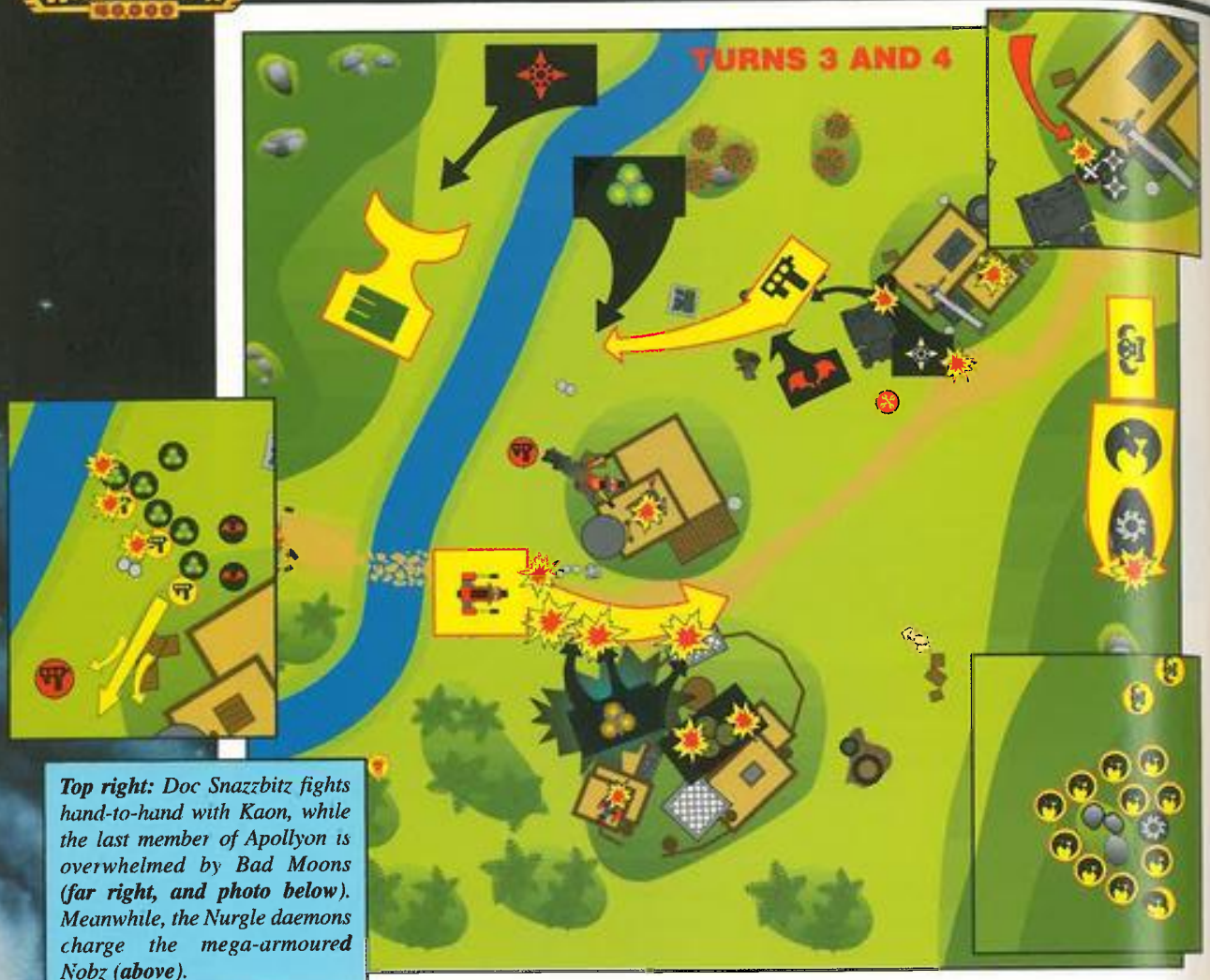
The plague-ridden daemonic entities summoned by Abaddon scuttled and slurped their way towards the mega-armoured Nobz, but didn't make contact. Thrugg turned and pumped shots into them with his *Kustom Blasta*, blowing impressive holes in Nurglings until his second shot blew the weapon up! Abaddon and the Black Guard shrugged off the desultory fire from some nearby Gretchin and the out of control Warbike, and marched off along their side of the river in an effort to head off the Warboss. The Chaos Gods promptly smiled, and the Warbike skidded through a hedge, bounced along the river and crashed into a building, killing its unlucky Ork rider (what a way to go!).

On the east side of the village Apollyon and the Deathskulls slugged it out. The Chaos Space Marines got the worst of it despite getting the first shots off and soon only the Chaos Marine armed with a missile launcher still stood. Kaptin Skumdreg found that his *Kustom Blasta* was impressively pyrotechnic, but he couldn't hit with it to save his life. Meanwhile, in the village, a suitably chaotic fight was developing. Kaon split their fire ineffectually between the Deathskulls and the rapidly approaching Doc Snazbitz, only killing his two Gretchin assistants Findzit and Fetchitz. Enraged, the Doc charged into combat with Kaon, but was quickly cut down. Another of Kaon's squad was punched full of holes by Warbike autocannon and Kaon with his last man ran for cover deeper in the Mek's junkyard.

The Night Watch pursued Thrugg relentlessly, the reaper-man unleashing a curtain of shells to cover the back of the remaining Terminator as he repeatedly tried to flame the apparently fire-proof mega-armoured Nobz – one flamed him back and he was set on fire instead! Reaper fire killed the War Buggy's driver and as it span out of control its gunner was killed by a still-virulent blight grenade. The Wartrak came through the hail of fire intact, but again its lascannon splashed off the Terminator's armour without punching through! The Night Watch Terminator was now ablaze, but in his massive armoured suit he was able to shrug this off and concentrate on the Squig Katapult. He was rewarded by killing one of its krew and setting the Katapult itself on fire.

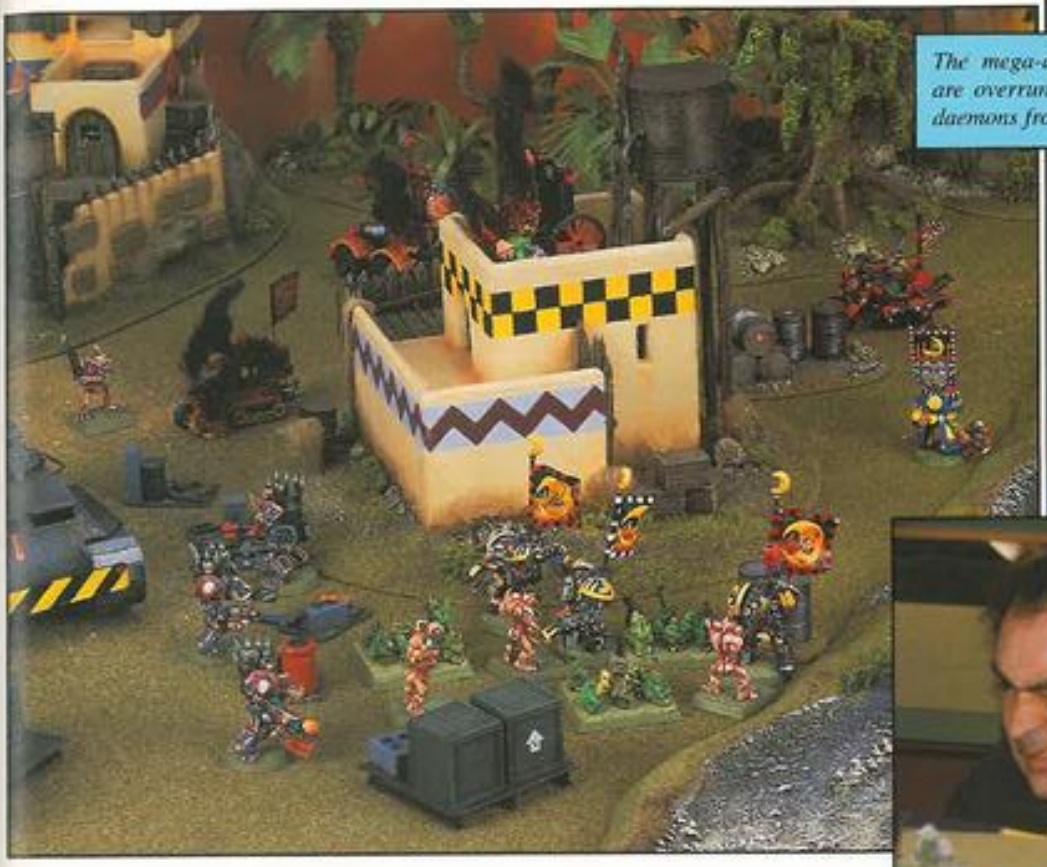
Morte and his remaining Plague Marine prepared to make their last stand as a Scorcher roared past

A hail of fire from the Night Watch's reaper autocannon plus an attack by Plaguebearers smashes apart the Evil Sunz mob.

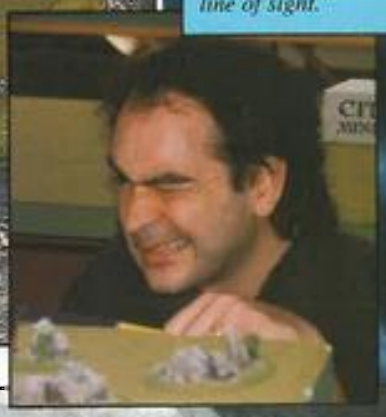


Top right: *Doc Snazzbitz fights hand-to-hand with Kaon, while the last member of Apollyon is overwhelmed by Bad Moons* ***(far right, and photo below).*** *Meanwhile, the Nurgle daemons charge the mega-armoured Nobz* ***(above).***

the gate and roasted them both. Morte survived the burst, but was left burning and very close to death. Fortunately, the remaining Traktor Kannon krew had succumbed to the blight grenade hurled into their nest and his dying gave Morte the power he needed to summon the rest of the Plaguebearers. This he did, their sickly presence manifesting itself on the battlefield even as Morte staggered off in a random direction and fell in the Ork's cesspit, blowing himself to pieces as he triggered a pocket of methane gas (it's true! We decided to roll a dice for it: 1-3 Kaboom – he blew up, 4-6 Splosh! the fire went out – it seemed like a good idea at the time…)



The mega-armoured Nobz are overrun by rampaging daemons from the warp.



"I have got line of sight, I have got line of sight."

More Ork reinforcements arrived. This was Oddgit the Weirdboy Warphead coming back from a fishing trip down the river and a large mob of Bad Moons who turned up next to the surviving member of Squad Apollyon. The lone Chaos Space Marine unleashed one plasma missile into the mob and killed two before they charged him, one more Ork fell to his bolt pistol and then he was pummelled and stabbed to death by the unstoppable green horde.

The Plaguebearers and Nurglings charged into the Orks like a tide of foulness. Those summoned by the dying Morte leapt amidst the Evil Sunz and hacked most of them to pieces, with only one Warbike and the Scorcher gunner surviving. The mega-Nobz were overwhelmed, unable to even fight back as they wretched uncontrollably at the Plaguebearer's psychic *Aura of Decay*. As realisation of how horribly dangerous Plaguebearers were became apparent, the Orks blasted at them with everything they could. The Scorcher gunner burned one putrescent Plaguebearer, but all the other shots bounced off the warp creature's shimmering daemonic auras. Oddgit started blasting off psychic powers at the daemons as well though he was too far away and blocked by the jungle.

The weight of the Orks' numbers was starting to tell. A mob of Gretchin reinforcements showed up in the same vicinity as the Bad Moons and Deathskulls, the Squig Katapult krew rallied and the Gretchin mob near Abaddon moved to surround him and his bodyguard (the fools…).

his Warboss (and then past him!). Abaddon's Black Guard finally turned their guns on the Gretchin which had the temerity to get in their way, killed a satisfying seven of them and caused the rest of them to flee in terror. Meanwhile, Abaddon went for the lucky long shot and rapid-fired at Thrugg with the custom storm bolter mounted in the *Talon of Horus*. Most of the shots sparked off Thrugg's force field, but one shorted it out and another inflicted a Wound on the Warboss himself. Honour was at least vaguely assuaged.

As well as being shot at, Thrugg himself could feel the foetid breath of daemons on the back of his neck by this stage. He ducked behind the water tower to get some respite before hurling a frag stikkbomb amongst his pursuers (it tickled the giggling Nurglings, but that's all). The daemons pursued and Thrugg's nerve broke in the face of such fearsome opponents (much to Jervis' delight, it must be said) and he fled 9" into the street. As the daemons piled after him they ran into a hail of overwatch and then normal fire from the Bad Moons, the Deathskulls and the Gretchin Laddoes, but with typically Orky luck the only victim was a Loota whose weapon blew up.

On the other hand, Oddgit was starting to get the hang of how to splat daemons. One of Morte's children was blasted apart by a *Power Vomit* which also flipped the riderless Warbike through the air. Two more Plaguebearers were sent howling back to the warp one after the other with the *'Edbutz* psychic power. The horrible vulnerability of daemons to psychic powers was becoming very obviously manifest.

Squad Kaon and the (still-burning) Night Watch Terminator combined their fire to clean out the Squig Katapult and Smasha Gun with

LAST GASP

The Plaguebearers rampaged on through the Orks' fire like true daemons, eviscerating the last two Evil Sunz with their plagueswords. The remaining mega-armoured Nob broke and ran as they charged him, the Nurglings scrabbling at his feet, making no impression as he legged it after

"Did we really write that, Jerv?"

flamer and bolt gun shots, though the Smasha gun nearly killed Kaon.

The reaper-man turned his attentions on Kaptin Skumdreg who was trying to creep up for a *Kustom Blaster* shot. Two autocannon hits put the good Kaptin to sleep for a very long time. Next, Oddgit got a little bit close and two of his minders fell victim to the reaper – this was enough to make Oddgit break and send him diving for cover, much to Jervis' disgust.

The last mega-armoured Nob flees before the might of Nurgle

It was time for both me and Jervis to pull our last tricks out of the bag. Mine was Kaon's *Stasis Grenade* which he hurled at the fleeing Thrugg. Despite Thrugg being out of range the Chaos Gods smiled once more and the scatter roll meant the stasis bubble caught him! A bit pointless I know, but it was dramatic and ensured Jervis couldn't wangle some kind of rally roll for Thrugg at the end of the game.

Jervis' last cast of the dice was far more scary, – the Deathskulls' Boss had a looted *Vortex Grenade* and had carefully worked his way forward into a position to throw it amidst Kaon and the Night Watch. Gasp, shriek, etc. He throws, he misses, he rolls the Scatter and Artillery dice – it's a dud! (hooray, rapturous cheering and general applause from Andy, mutters of "never again" from Jervis).

Oddgit rallied at the end of the Orks' turn and left us just with cashing up victory points to do: 12-7 to the forces of Chaos, so a victory for Abaddon even though he didn't succeed in his primary mission of duffing over Thrugg.

We're not quite sure what Andy's up to here, but Jervis doesn't look too pleased about it!

CHAOS GLOATING

AhahahahahahaHAHAHAHA! (Hmph, excuse my maniacal, chaotic laughter). I really, really thought I was going to lose this one. When Abaddon managed to teleport down 12" away in precisely the wrong place and Thrugg beetled off in the opposite direction I thought I was done for. I never even dreamt that I could come out ahead on victory points with my squads scattered all over the place and Ork reinforcements pouring in from all directions, but fate (the Gods of Chaos as I like to think of it) smiled on me once again. Jerv's reinforcements actually started coming on all in the same place and I took great pains to use the Mek's shack to block their line of fire to my battered squads in the village.

Of course my plan could have been better, much better in fact. With hindsight (oh, that reliable 20/20 hindsight!) I should have teleported one squad down on the first turn (probably Apollyon to maximise their firing opportunities) to establish where Thrugg was, and then plotted the rest of my force to come down around him on the second turn. Duh… stupid!

Had I taken a Tzeentch Sorcerer (as I did the first time we played this scenario) life would have been a lot easier as well – the *Teleport*, *Gate* or *Displacement* psychic powers would have overcome some of my problems with moving around quickly. In the first battle we fought with my Sorcerer, he was mounted on a flying Disc of Tzeentch. He zipped around and silenced the Ork field artillery by bashing its Gretchin krew in hand-to-hand combat, and this freed my other forces to concentrate on fighting the Orks.

As it was, Abaddon got stuck in a corner of the table with nothing but Gretchin to fight (boo, hiss) while his minions had to do all the hard work. It's worth noting that Abaddon and his bodyguard made up over a third of my points total and their impact on the battle was limited to offing 50 points of Gretchin and looking threatening. Natch!

I also made the mistake off wasting too much of my limited firepower on the mega-armoured Nobz guarding Thrugg. With their high saving throws it was highly unlikely that I would be able to bring them down with mere bolter fire, although I expended several reaper bursts on them as well (all to no effect, I might add).

Instead, the daemons managed to tip the balance by slaughtering the mega-armoured Nobz in an offhand manner that made Jervis very keen to kill them, taking the heat off the Chaos Space Marines for a while. The flexibility in summoning daemons to where they are needed most was amply illustrated by the Plaguebearers summoned by Morte. These helped out tremendously by killing off the Evil Sunz and reinforcing the south side of the village (at least until they got killed), buying me the time I needed to mop up the north.

Nonetheless, daemons aside, my man of the match award goes to the reaper-man who had a field day in a truly target-rich environment. His ability to move and fire was invaluable as it allowed him to manoeuvre for the best shot each turn and maximise his damage potential. The

reaper is less nasty than an assault cannon, but it does have the advantage that it seldom, if ever, jams, and in a long haul game like this it's reliability proved a big advantage too.

And the scenario itself? Well I thought it was a bit rough that Jervis ended up choosing which of his Boyz to bring on as reinforcements virtually all the time, perhaps the unit should be randomised instead. The six turn limit on the game seemed too long – if it ain't resolved by Abaddon bashing Thrugg within four turns then it's probably not going to be resolved in six either. Besides, this was a raid, not a siege! Still, as Jervis pointed out, fretting too much about the mythical "Game Balance" of a scenario is neither here nor there. Either it's fun or it isn't fun, and this one's certainly good fun.

NOO MANIJMENT

"Dese Chaos Boyz are tuff, 'praps we should listen to 'em arfter all"

Jervis: Well, for a while there it looked like Thrugg might actually be able to get away, but sadly it was not to be. Gork and Mork succumbed to the power of the Chaos Gods. If only the Ork reinforcements had come on in a more useful position, or that damned reaper autocannon had proved slightly less effective, or Magteef's *Vortex Grenade* had not been a dud. If only, if only...

Still, at least this time Thrugg survived, which is more than can be said for the first two times I played the scenario!

Interestingly, of the three times we've played this scenario now, I think I enjoyed the first most of all. This is odd really, because I lost the first game badly, and since then we've modified and twiddled with the rules to improve play balance so that this game was the most "even" we've played so far. Nonetheless, my memory of that first game was that it was more like a story unfolding than a "competitive game" being played, even though it was probably horribly unbalanced. It just goes to show that sometimes trying to make sure that everybody has the same chance of winning can actually make a game *less* interesting, rather than more so! You can't have everything, I guess.

This said, the scenario was still fun to play, and was tense and exciting to the end, though I'm not sure if the Orks can actually win it, even now – that's my excuse anyway! In any case, Andy, as ever, deserved his win, and what could possibly have been more appropriate for Issue 200 than having Andy beat me in a battle report – AGAIN!

By
Ian Pickstock
and
Adrian Wood

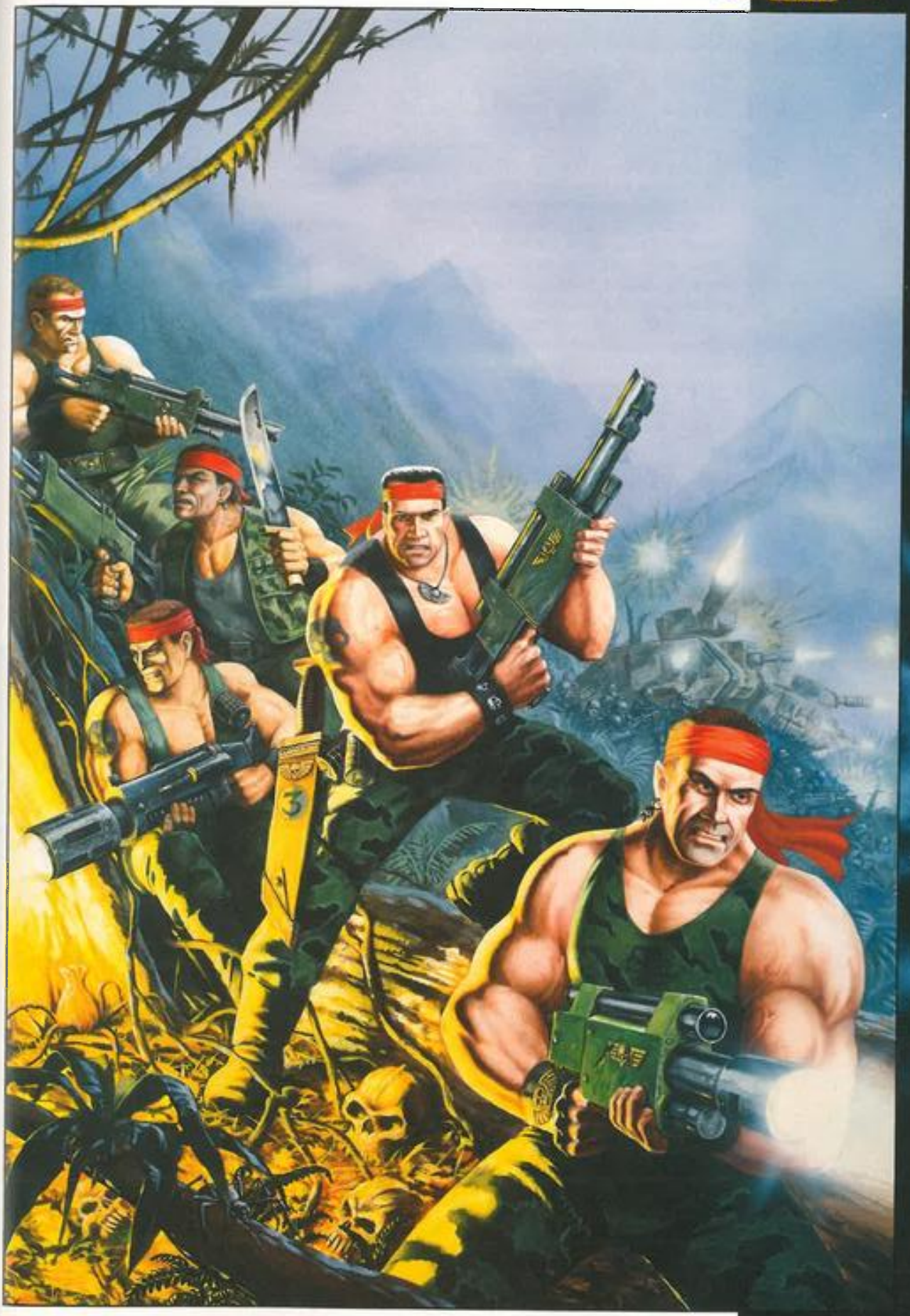
WARHAMMER 40,000

A WARRIOR'S DUTY

BOMBARDMENT

Ian: Just recently, the pages of White Dwarf have been bombarding you with articles about ways to make your games more interesting. Not that they aren't already fascinating of course, but there are only so many different ways of playing the four missions in the box. Jervis gives you scenarios, rules for tournament play and friendly (you hope) games. Andy Chambers has been serving up campaign ideas, and Stillmania is never short of a word or two about doing the hobby properly. I've been wittering on about wacky army organisations and sticking to the background, and the theme here in the White Dwarf bunker appears to be themes. Themed terrain, themed armies, themed battlefields, themed colour schemes, you name it, we'll theme it. Everyone has a dozen and one new and exciting slants on ways to play our games. If you're fairly new to the hobby then you might be feeling a little bewildered. Well, do not fear, White Dwarf is here. This month, to show you that there's nothing wrong with playing normal games, Adrian and I have fought a common or garden Warhammer 40,000 battle. In fact, if you've been doing all this weird stuff of late, then this will make a refreshing change. The results of our game are presented here in this month's battle report. We just took the Warhammer 40,000 boxed set and played a game following all the normal set up rules – no scenarios, no campaign rules, no special reinforcement rules. Just a mission card apiece, some Strategy cards, 1500 points on each side, and a 6' x 4' table filled with the wonderful Studio terrain. As usual, we took notes as we went along, and I took some snaps with a 35mm camera. This would give us some reference material for taking proper shots with our mammoth photography set up. So without further ado, it's time for battle!

Having looked back at previous White Dwarfs, our esteemed Editor, Jake, noticed that we hadn't actually had a battle report with a pure Imperial Guard force. Sure, Jake had included some as allies in a Space Marine army, while back in issue 189 I had actually commanded an Imperial Guard contingent in the *Great Devourer* battle report. In that battle Adrian had taken an allied force of Eldar against the onslaught of the Tyranids. Once again, I volunteered to take command of the Imperial Guard. Only this time I would be fighting against Adrian, who was once again commanding the dreaded Eldar.



"...it just goes to show that really good models are always dead shooty, or wicked in hand-to-hand combat."

SPOILT FOR CHOICE

Ian: So, what was I going to include in my Imperial Guard army? When I pick an army, at least some of the troops are chosen for no other reason than that I really like the particular models. Of course, when those particular troops then go on to win the game, it just goes to show that really good models are always dead shooty, or wicked in hand-to-hand combat. So, you might think that my army is going to include lots of tanks. Well, the thought did occur to me, but my range of tastes does actually stretch beyond those great hunks of steel. Storm Troopers are another of my faves, as are the assassins. The Eversor shrine stands head and shoulders above the others, in my own estimations. Of course, in game terms all three of the assassin shrines are on a fairly equal footing – it's just a matter of taste and gaming style as to which one you prefer. Obviously, to include all of these elements in the army, some compromise would have to be introduced. It was at this stage that I sheepishly headed upstairs to put back the three Leman Russ battle tanks that I had already chosen for the army.

After much dithering around, and leafing through the army list, I was at loss as to how to go about picking an Imperial Guard army. The problem seems to be that with most armies you start by picking your characters, commanders, psykers, and the like, and then pick the rest of the army. Unfortunately, the Imperial Guard army structure is not quite as open as other army lists, and there are a few restrictions which must be followed. The overall effect of this is that the number of regimental squads that you have dictates the number of goodies, like Leman Russ tanks, that you can include.

Suddenly, I had the answer: work backwards! I knew I wanted a Leman Russ, a Storm Trooper squad, and another tank for good measure. This was three additional units, so I would need at least three regimental squads. In the end, I decided to have two Command squads, to give my force more flexibility, and split my army roughly in half. I ended up with a Catachan Command HQ, led by a captain, with one Catachan Imperial Guard squad and one Heavy Weapon squad. To this I attached the Storm Trooper squad – it's only right that these elite troops should be assigned to the commanding officer. Finally, a rightly feared Hellhound was also included as the platoon's second additional unit. The second platoon consisted of a Cadian Command squad, with two almost identically equipped Cadian Imperial Guard squads. Attached to these was a Leman Russ battle tank.

There weren't any problems including the Eversor Assassin, he would just count as an ally from the Imperial Agents list, costing lots of

IMPERIAL GUARD ARMY

Catachan Command HQ: Captain with bolt gun and power fist. Two Guardsmen with lasguns. One Guardsman with melta-gun. One Guardsman with plasma gun.

Catachan Squad: One heavy bolter weapons team. One Guardsman with flamer. Sergeant with chainsword and bolt pistol. Veterans: *Freedom Fighters.*

Hellhound Tank: Turret mounted Inferno cannon, hull mounted heavy bolter.

Catachan Heavy Weapons Squad: Two lascannon weapon teams. One heavy bolter weapons team. Veterans: *Slick Crew.*

Storm Trooper Squad: One heavy bolter weapons team. One Guardsman with plasma gun. Veterans: *Dead Eye Shots.*

Imperial Guard *Take & Hold* objective marker

points. Although work on this particular book has only just begun, details of the Eversor Assassin can be found in White Dwarf 191.

You might think that including such an expensive character is why I haven't taken a psyker in my force. The real reason for not including a psyker is that I'm taking a bit of a gamble. I just know Adrian won't be able to resist including lots of exciting Aspect Warriors, Exarchs, and suchlike. So much so that any thoughts of taking a second psyker in addition to his Farseer will be far from his mind *(if only Adrian had the powers of a Farseer – Ed)*. If the gamble pays off, Adrian will be stuck rolling 1D6 for the warp flux for the entire game (ho, ho, ho!).

For missions, Adrian got *The Assassins,* while I was lumbered with *Take and Hold.* Well, not my ideal choice, but imagine if the missions had been reversed! The first of my Strategy cards was *Brilliant Strategy,* which would allow me to add 1D6 to my very low strategy rating. I also got the *Look out sir – aargh!* card, which would be very useful in preventing Adrian from completing his mission.

In Warhammer 40,000 you can either play a four turn game, or you can roll a dice to see how long the game lasts. Usually we just play for four turns, but this time we decided to roll for it. We ended up with the longest game possible by this method – five turns.

So it was, with Strategy cards clutched tight to my chest, that I headed off, looking forward to the prospect of deploying second and getting to go first. What fun I'd have, with none of the usual need to deploy across the entire table. I could even go for a refused flank, or something clever like that.

The hour of the battle arrived, and gleefully I played my *Brilliant Strategy* card, informing Adrian that I was putting him into bat first, so to speak. You can imagine my dismay when Adrian pulled out one of his own Strategy cards, *Traitor*, and announced that he was using it to counter my card. I was going to have to deploy first after all!

Cadian Command Squad: Lieutenant with shotgun. Two Guardsmen with melta-guns. One heavy bolter weapons team.

Cadian Squad: One autocannon weapons team. One Guardsman with plasma gun. Veterans: *Freedom Fighters.*

Cadian Squad: One autocannon weapons team. One Guardsman with melta-gun. Veterans: *Freedom Fighters.*

Eversor Assassin: *Executor Pistol, Eversor Combat Drugs, Neuro-Gauntlet, Sentinel Array,* melta-bombs and power sword.

Leman Russ Battle Tank: Turret mounted battle cannon, hull mounted lascannon, and two sponson mounted heavy bolters.

Adrian: It's been a long time since I've played a large game, so I was looking forward to the challenge. Recently, I've just been playing a lot of quite small games, forming campaigns linked together by a narrative (I'll probably talk about these smaller games at another time). You will all know one of my favourite armies, along with the Orks (of course), are the enigmatic Eldar. I've played a couple of battle reports with them, but this time I thought I'd try using them a little differently. The Eldar army is really several army lists in one. You can make up armies consisting entirely of Scouts, or Exodite Dragon riders, Guardians or Aspect Warriors, or any combination of these. What a choice! This time, I decided to pick something rather unusual for me: an army based around Aspect Warriors.

Aspect Warriors are all squads of troops who fight according to a specific combat discipline. The Dark Reapers wear heavy armour and dominate the battlefield with their missile launchers, reaping a harvest of smashed tanks and blasted troops. The Howling Banshees unleash terrifying battle cries as they charge into close combat, the psychosonic amplifiers built into their masks overloading the nervous systems of the enemy. The Banshees easily cut down the stricken troops who are momentarily paralysed by the shocking noise. Fire Dragons spit forth powerful blasts of heat which reduce all but the mightiest of armoured targets to pools of molten slag, whilst the Dire Avengers spray the enemy troops with bursts of razor-sharp projectiles, slicing through flesh and bone alike. The Striking Scorpions, like the Howling Banshees, are exponents of close combat, raking their foes with their mandiblasters and then butchering the survivors with chainswords and shuriken pistols. Teleporting into range, the Warp Spiders flay troops alive with their monofilament guns, slicing their foes' innards into the consistency of soup, whilst the delicate Swooping Hawks fly high over the battlefield, raining death from above with their grenade harnesses.

As you can see, each squad is extremely well equipped for carrying out one kind of battlefield role, but really no other. But when used in the right combination, Aspect Warriors are a match for anyone. Really, I needed each squad to back the others up and concentrate on specific tasks. The Swooping Hawks and Warp Spiders would trash any commanders or artillery and weapon teams. The Dark Reapers and Fire Dragons would be admirably able to deal with any heavy armour that came too close for comfort. A combination of Howling Banshees and Striking Scorpions would then butcher troops up close with fire support from the Dire Avengers. This Aspect army would allow me to counter any situation and any mission while fighting against Ian's Imperial force.

ADRIAN'S ALL ASPECT WARRIOR ELDAR ARMY

The Avatar

Farseer: *Witch Blade* and a *Vortex Grenade* (from *Special Issue*).

Dire Avengers

Dark Reapers

Howling Banshees

Striking Scorpions

Swooping Hawks

Warp Spiders

Fire Dragons

ELDAR TURN 1

As the combatants spied each other from across the battlefield, an ear-splitting scream filled the air – the Imperial Guard had unleashed their preliminary barrage. The enemy were trying to pulverise the largest concentration of troops at the silo, where the Avatar, Howling Banshees and Striking Scorpions stood. The ground shook as the shells impacted, the whole area becoming engulfed in scorching fire and thick black smoke. Moments later the air cleared to reveal a deep crater, the broken bodies of two Striking Scorpions, and two Howling Banshees sprawled like broken dolls, their crushed Aspect armour charred and blackened. The whole army held its breath in expectation until the towering form of the Avatar emerged unscathed from the debris. At the sight of the living god the remnants of the two close combat squads shouted their battle cries in exultation. Speeding off across the battlefield towards the cover of the cesspool, they made ready to strike down the advancing Imperial Guard in deadly close combat. The two squads would easily be able to combine their strength to overcome any number of combatants. The Dire Avengers ran to the cover of the silo, ready to advance into the open next turn and offer covering fire to the advancing Aspect Warriors. As if on cue, both the Swooping Hawks and the Warp Spiders seemed to disappear from the battlefield. In a twinkling of an eye the Swooping Hawks had taken to the skies, flying high over the land, scanning the horizon in order to pick out the Imperial Army commander: their target. The Warp Spiders had indeed disappeared. They had teleported across the battlefield, reappearing in the cover of an abandoned bunker. From this position they would be able to ambush one squad

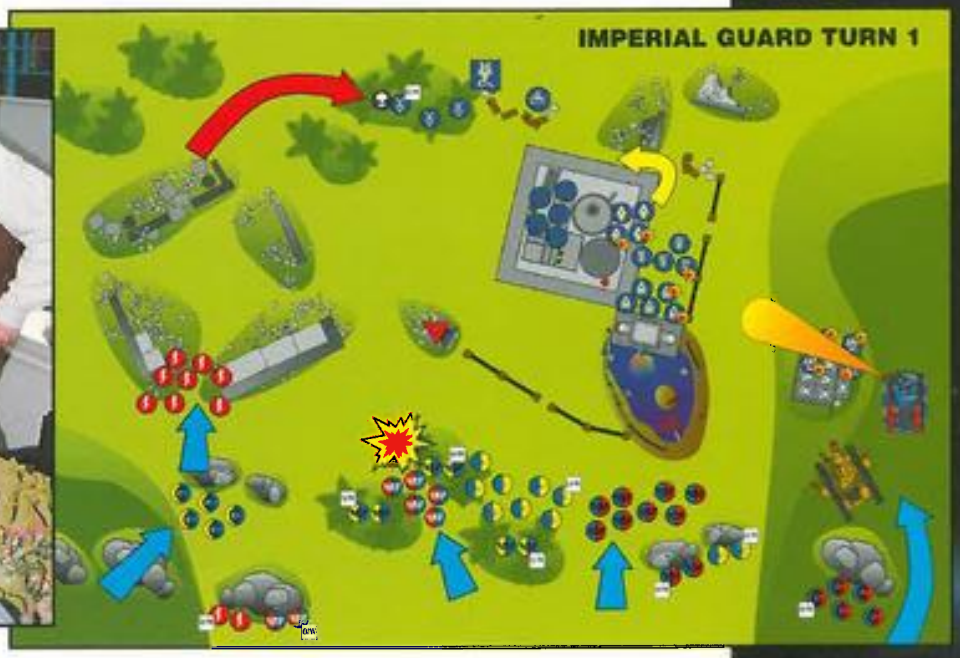
The Imperial Guard reserves thunder down the right flank of the battlefield, the Eldar assault force firmly in their sights.

after another with their lethal monofilament guns. Meanwhile, aware of the threat to the Dark Reapers on the right flank from the Eversor Assassin, the Avatar's huge form began to lope across the battlefield, the earth quaking as massive legs propelled his molten body towards the Imperial killing machine. Sensing the danger, the Farseer also moved swiftly to the Avatar's side, into the cover of some crates of weapons, ready to bring his deadly psychic powers to the fore. At a word from the Farseer the Dark Reapers froze into overwatch, ready to unleash their frag missiles against any enemy movement from the other side of the battlefield. As the Eldar army readied itself for the Imperial attack, the Farseer started to draw power into himself in order to attack the Eversor. Behind his mask the Eldar psyker's face twisted into a snarl of rage as he realised that the warp flux was much too weak for him to do anything. The Farseer was unable to unleash any psychic energy against the Assassin.

IMPERIAL GUARD TURN 1

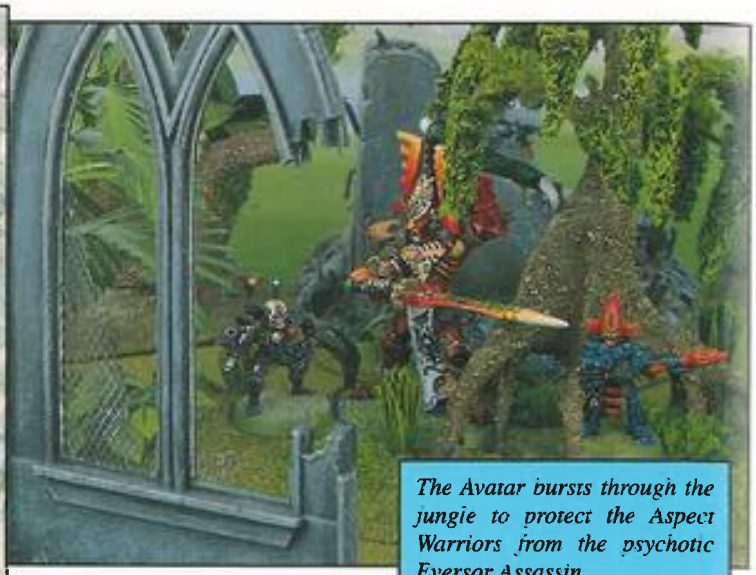
From his position the Eversor could see the Dark Reapers. Subtle nuances in their stance told him that they stood ready to fire – a head on assault from here could result in disaster. With a quick reflex action of his wrist the hypodermic injectors pressed home their toxic load. The Assassin could feel the power in his arms and legs increase as the toxin saturated his blood with oxygen, literally super-charging his muscles. The Assassin swiftly out-flanked the Eldar heavy weapon specialists. The Dark Reapers spun round to face the assailant, but too late to level their missile launchers. The combat was short and the Assassin wasted no time in following up to engage a second member of the squad, ready to kill again.

"Prepare to eat fire and steel, Eldar scum".



On the right, the Eldar had revealed the main thrust of their attack. With this in mind, the Imperial Guard tank drivers fired up their mighty engines and sped into the fray. The turret of the Hellhound swung around menacingly, firing a great gout of flame at the Warp Spiders, Howling Banshees and Striking Scorpions. The flame fell short, and the Scorpions and Banshees escaped unscathed. Two of the Warp Spiders were not so lucky and fell, their armour melted and the flesh blasted from their bones. The other two Warp Spiders were almost as unlucky, as their armour caught fire, engulfing them in flames. However, their torment was short-lived as the heavy bolters on the Leman Russ riddled the two stricken Warp Spiders with explosive bolts, slaying them instantly. The battle cannon then fired its massive shell into the middle of the Dire Avengers, felling two of their number. Against firepower of this magnitude the surviving Dire Avengers were forced to seek cover amidst the industrial complex. The lascannon and heavy bolter aimed at the Howling Banshees and Striking Scorpions, but the cover of sludge outflow made it difficult to draw a bead and all the shots went wide of their mark.

In the centre, the massed Imperial Guard army stood over readied weapons, crouching low behind rocks or strange jungle vegetation to get the best cover possible. Spotting the swift, agile forms moving across the battlefield, the squad sergeants began barking orders. With most of the Eldar still out of sight, the heavy weapon squad and one of the Cadian Squads set overwatch. Meanwhile, the Catachan squad and the other Cadian Squad, cautiously left the cover of the jungle, only to be met by the shrieking sound of a Dark Reaper frag missile. The deadly warhead exploded amongst the Cadians taking out two Guardsmen. The rest of the squad remained steady, despite the loss of two of their number. On the left flank, the hardened Storm Troopers began to make a break for the cover of the ruined cathedral, their heavy bolter weapons team remaining under cover of the rocks, covering the advance of their comrades. Now that the pre-battle barrage had done its grim work, the Catachan HQ emerged from their high vantage



The Avatar bursts through the jungle to protect the Aspect Warriors from the psychotic Eversor Assassin.

point, and moved into the rocky outcrop that the Storm Troopers had occupied.

The warp flux was beginning to be drawn to the powerful Farseer. The Eldar seer tried to find the lines of fate that spelled *Doom* for the Eversor Assassin, but the will of the Imperial forces proved too strong and the power was nullified. This didn't prevent the Farseer from engaging the Eversor in the safest way possible, by attacking him using the *Executioner.* The ghostly image of the Farseer materialised before the Eversor Assassin, and after a brief exchange of blows, the Farseer's ethereal body returned to its host leaving the Assassin with a deep wound from his deadly *Witch Blade*.

ELDAR TURN 2

As the kill-crazy Imperial Assassin swiftly shed the eviscerated body of the unfortunate Dark Reaper and prepared to strike down the second, the Avatar smashed through the trees and loomed over the Eversor, brandishing the Wailing Doom high over his head. At the sudden appearance of the towering god-like being, both the Imperial Guard heavy weapon teams with lascannons, who had been anticipating his appearance, fired their weapons, but wildly missed the huge target. With the Warp Spiders burned to death by the terrible gushing fire of the Hellhound, and the Dire Avengers smashed by the battle cannon of the Leman Russ and broken and grovelling behind cover, the attack on the left flank was well and truly crushed. The rest of the Eldar army were bowed, but not broken, from the concentrated fire of the Imperial Guard tanks. Once the Imperial troops had advanced far enough, the Aspect Warriors would pounce, creating a cordon around the Imperial Guard objective and preventing their foes from seizing it. There was no point in throwing their lives away, there was still plenty of time to strike. Finally, the Swooping Hawks pinpointed their target, the Catachan Commander, who was foolhardy enough to be advancing with the Storm Troopers. The flying Aspect Warriors landed out of sight of the enemy troops and gathered themselves for the next phase of their attack.

The Avatar bellowed with daemonic rage as he stood over the Eversor, swinging the

Wailing Doom wildly in an attempt to catch the dodging Assassin off guard. Only a single blow from the huge rune-encrusted sword struck home, and the Eversor reeled from the force of the blow but remained in control of himself. The Assassin pushed his drugged body to the limit and the second Dark Reaper was consumed in a blur of blows, shattering the reinforced Aspect armour like thin plastic and reducing the Aspect Warrior's body to shreds. Concentrating all his energy against the Eversor, the Farseer first sealed his fate by casting *Doom* and then projected himself forward with *Executioner* once again. The Eversor suddenly found himself fighting off a ghostly figure who appeared to be an Eldar Farseer. However, he was too skilled a combatant to fall so easily to such runic power and the Farseer was repelled, unhurt by the combat but without having killed his opponent.

IMPERIAL GUARD TURN 2

Things were looking good overall, but it looked like the Eversor's number was up. With a lucky roll of the dice, I might have been able to have a crack at the Avatar, but if the Farseer was going to insist on lending a hand then I wasn't going to last the turn. Realising his fate, the Eversor injected himself with *Terminus*, regardless of what happened to him now, he would be able to hold the Avatar up from an entire turn.

Well the Eldar had been beaten back by the brute force of my tanks, now it was time to consolidate my position, ready to take the mine shaft. The Cadian Shock troops that didn't move last turn, advanced, while the other squads set overwatch in case the Fire Dragons made a move. The Storm Troopers continued their flanking move through the cathedral, in an attempt to dislodge the Fire Dragons and further protect the advance to the objective. The Catachan HQ followed them in support, while nearby weapon teams of the Storm Troopers and Cadian Shock troops swung their heavy bolter and autocannon round, ready to open fire if the Swooping Hawks made an attack. On the right, the Cadian command section split off from its heavy weapon team and made a run for the disused emplacement from the middle of the table. From here they would be able to cover any counter-attacks made by the Howling Banshees. The Hellhound continued down the flank, chasing after the survivors of the previous barrage of fire. Confident that the Hellhound would manage on its own, the Leman Russ, swung to the left and moved toward the centre of the field, ready to catch the Avatar in a deadly crossfire, with the heavy weapons squad. The kill ratio this turn was much less impressive than before as a large part of the Eldar force had retreated to lick its wounds and plan a counter offensive. The Hellhound didn't let me down though, sending all the Striking Scorpions, and two of the Dire Avengers to a fiery grave.

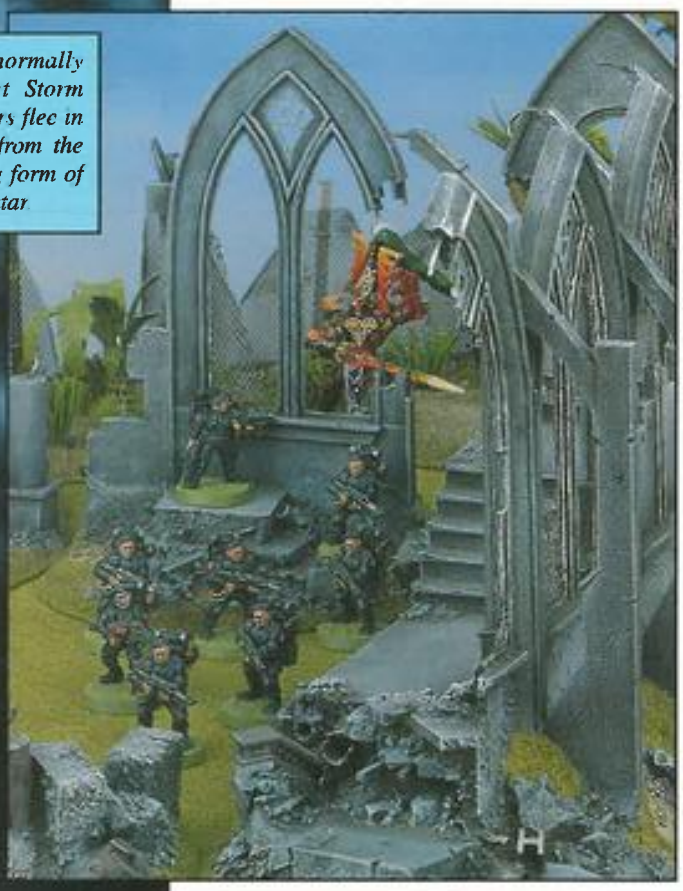
The warp flux waned again, leaving the Farseer with no force at all and unable to influence the battle with his considerable powers.

Swooping Hawks descend from the skies, hell bent on taking out the Imperial Guard commander with a fistful of krak grenades.

ELDAR TURN 3

The Imperial forces drew ever closer to their objective, and the Eldar found themselves losing more and more precious Aspect Warriors by the second. A simple assassination was turning into a bloodbath. What was happening? Well it wasn't over yet, my Swooping Hawks stood ready to rain deadly krak grenades on the Imperial Guard army commander, if I could kill him I would get myself five victory points, more if the ensuing break tests got rid of a few more squads.

The Fire Dragons, from their positions in the cover of the silo, saw the Storm Troopers advancing to their right through the ruins. They froze on overwatch, ready to meet the new attack. The Eldar close combat troops retreated into cover, desperate to get away from the Leman Russ and the Hellhound. Having been saved by the Avatar, the surviving Dark Reaper ran to take up a position against the Imperial tanks. Unless they were stopped they would continue to run unchecked across the battlefield, smashing the beleaguered Eldar force to pieces with their heavy firepower. At last the time had come, as across the other side of the battlefield the Swooping Hawks braved the Imperial overwatch fire in order to cut down the Catachan Commander. As the Aspect Warriors flew down from behind their cover, the Catachan weapons teams opened up with everything they had, sending 2 Swooping Hawks burning like torches from the sky. The rest of the squad remained resolved to their mission and pelted the Imperial Commander mercilessly with krak grenades. A nearby trooper threw himself in the way of one of the lethal projectiles whilst another hit home. The Catachan Commander took the full force of the armour-piercing grenade on his chest, but as if by a miracle he survived. The Swooping Hawks stood in confusion as the truth dawned on them. Their mission had failed and they now stood in the midst of the enemy with absolutely no hope of escape!



The normally stalwart Storm Troopers flee in terror from the flaming form of the Avatar

Meanwhile, the Avatar finally overcame the fancy swordplay of the Eversor and brought his own huge sword down on the Assassin's head. The Eversor was split from head to foot by the awesome Wailing Doom, which screamed as it tasted victory and alien blood once more. As the Avatar stood shouting his cry of victory across the battlefield, the Farseer tried to strike down a Storm Trooper with the *Executioner* runic power, but was unable to cover the distance to the enemy trooper. As the Farseer gathered himself for the next threat against his rapidly depleting force, the Avatar was suddenly engulfed with plasma as the body of the Eversor exploded. The many drugs and chemicals held in such careful balance within the body of the Assassin, had finally reached critical and exploded. The towering god waded out of the molten ball of plasma, shedding globules of liquid fire and bellowing in triumph.

IMPERIAL GUARD TURN 3

The Swooping Hawks had made a fatal error, even if they had dispatched my Captain there was a fairly good chance that the rest of the troops would have still been around. However, things had gone disastrously wrong, and with a bit of heroics and lot of luck my Captain had survived the attack. This meant my troops within 12" would not have to take a break test for a slain army commander. The Imperial Guard took no time in bringing weapons to bear on the now very vulnerable Swooping Hawks. My luck looked like it was running the same way as Adrian's when all but one fell to the fusillade of fire that included half the Storm Trooper squad as well as the Catachan HQ. Just one Swooping Hawk was all it would take to kill my Captain. But fortunately (for me) Adrian failed his break test and the Swooping Hawk headed for the hills.

The other half of the Storm Trooper squad had reached the cover of a cathedral wall and brought their hot-shot lasguns to bear on the Fire Dragons hiding in the industrial complex. The Fire Dragons on overwatch were unable to fire as their short ranged melta-guns were well out of range.

In the centre of the field the Catachan heavy weapon teams concentrated all their fire against the massive figure of the Avatar, but despite his huge size their shots still went wide of the mark. It was the turn of the Leman Russ crew to see if their aim would fair any better. The battle cannon shell thundered over the heads of the Guardsmen, but fell far short of its intended target. The lascannon was able to find its target though, the huge weapon fired a bolt of laser energy, smack into the Avatar's chest. My joy was short lived though, as the Avatar barely flinched, the shot absorbed by his incredible armour.

The much feared powers of the Farseer failed to make an impact again, as he chose to store all of his power this turn.

ELDAR TURN 4

Time was beginning to run out and the Eldar had to try to stem the closing Imperial tide. The two immediate threats were the Storm Troopers on the right and the Hellhound on the left. The Farseer made off to support the Dark Reaper against the Hellhound whilst the Avatar charged towards the Storm Troopers. The elite Imperial Troops suddenly beheld the sight of a twelve foot tall daemon wielding a huge rune-encrusted sword and roaring like thunder. Unable to withstand the terrifying vision the whole squad turned on their heels and fled in abject horror. In revenge the Storm Troopers weapon team unleashed their heavy bolter against the Fire Dragons and struck four of them solidly with shells. Nevertheless the Fire Dragon's armour proved to be much too difficult to smash

as all but one Aspect Warrior remained on their feet. As the Imperial troops scattered on the right the situation on the left grew more desperate. The Dark Reaper took careful aim with his missile launcher at the Hellhound which even now was looming dangerously close to the survivors of the Eldar force. Despite the legendary accuracy of the rangefinder helmet, the Dark Reaper missed the huge tank and the fate of the left flank, as well as the force as a whole appeared to be sealed. Without any further ado the Farseer drew power from his *Witch Blade* and projected himself forward to strike at the Hellhound in one last gesture of defiance. From inside the Hellhound's hull the crew looked on in amazement at the ghost-like form of the Farseer appeared in front of them. The Farseer struck the Imperial tank again and again, smashing the tracks and splitting the hull in two. The crew were incinerated in an instant as the fuel tanks ruptured, great gouts of flame erupting high into the air.

IMPERIAL GUARD TURN 4

Oh no, my Hellhound destroyed! Well it was my own silly fault for getting too close to that Farseer. But the battle wasn't over yet, I still had a mission, and if I was careless a well timed and executed counterattack by the Eldar could easily even the score. Remember too that my army commander was still in danger, and if killed would earn Adrian a very respectable 5 victory points. With these facts in mind, the three Imperial Guard squads in the centre continued to move forward, covering each other's advance. With the loss of the Storm Troopers, the Catachan captain had no choice but to concede the left flank. This would leave the troops trying to take the objective with the additional problem of the Fire Dragons in the industrial complex.

ELDAR TURN 5

The Avatar whirled about looking for more victims on whom to vent his rage and pounced on the nearby Cadian troops. Unlike the Storm Troopers, the Cadians stood their ground, ready to die in the service of the Emperor, and die they would indeed…

The surviving Fire Dragons, Howling Banshees and the Farseer all huddled behind the cover of the silo and blasted the advancing Imperial troops, but all to no avail. The Dark Reaper had the last word as he cut down a lone Catachan trooper. Then, with one huge swipe of his blade the Avatar scythed down the Cadians. The survivors scrambled away from the massive creature but, despite all their efforts, the end appeared in sight…

IMPERIAL GUARD TURN 5

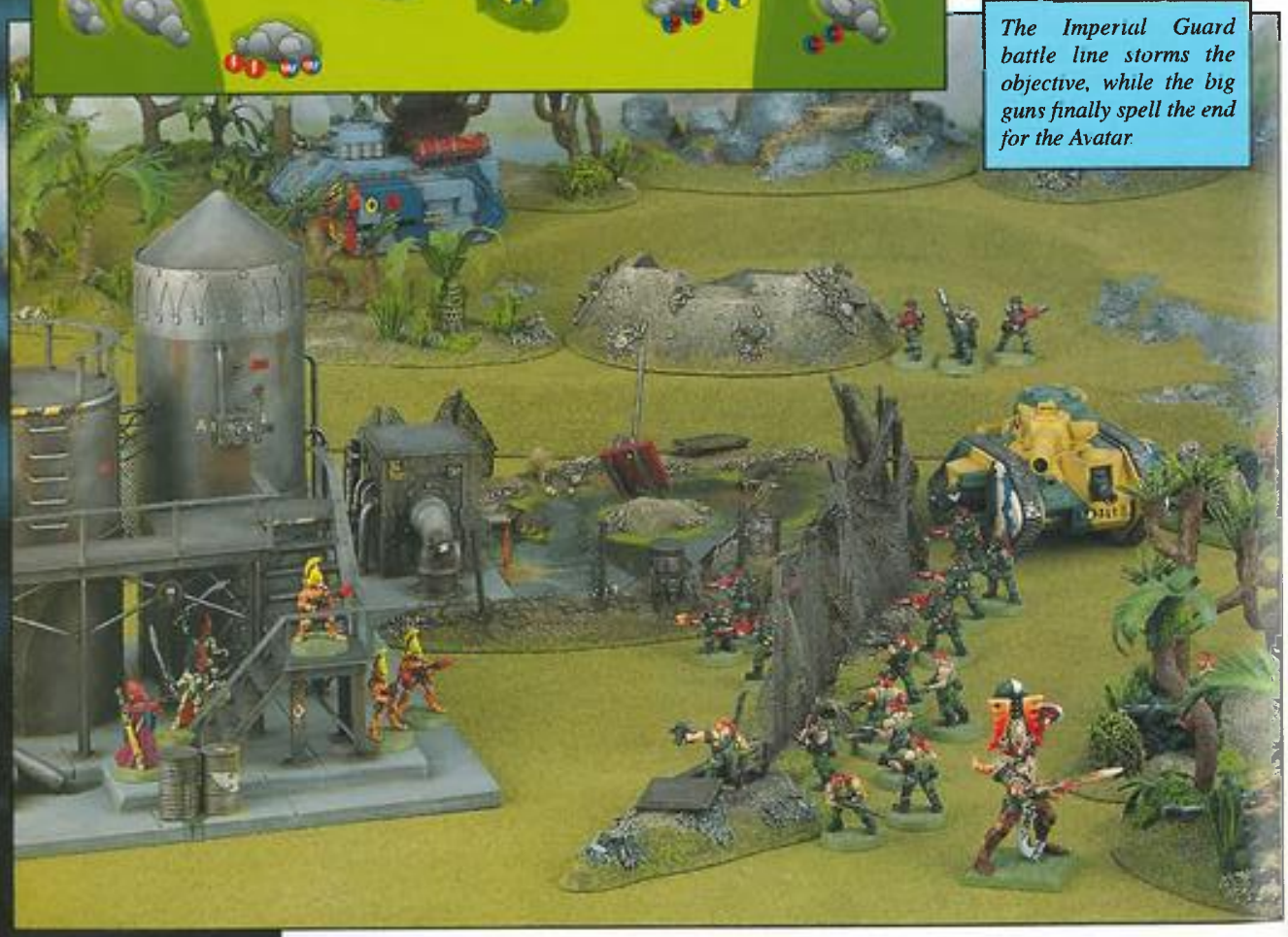
As my army moved forward, it became obvious that the counterattack would never arrive. The Eldar had suffered heavy casualties and their nerve was broken. The Catachan squad took up position around their objective –the mine shaft, while the rest of the Imperial Guard squads took up position to take out as many of the remaining Eldar as possible. Of course the Avatar was still running amok amongst my battle line, but now it faced the crossfire from my many lascannon. It was still a tense finale as the battle cannon and lascannon on the Leman Russ went wide as did the Cadians' autocannons. But the Avatar was finally silenced by one the Catachan lascannon weapon teams, the bolt of energy engulfing the daemonic fiend. Once the smoke had cleared there was no sign at all of the Eldar Avatar.

As the sergeant of the Catachan squad began his descent down the mine shaft, the Eldar struck out with a final gesture of defiance, the Eldar Farseer ended the conflict by once again striking out with the *Executioner* power. The Catachan stood little chance as the ghostly apparition of the Iyanden Farseer appeared in front of him wielding a deadly *Witch Blade*.

OUCH!

Adrian: Ouch, that was a bad one! Well what can I say? The army was OK, the set up was reasonable, nice concentrated force and all that, but from the word go I found myself in trouble. You can sometimes recover from a bad start, particularly if the game is longer than 4 turns, but unfortunately having been caught out by the preliminary barrage and the reserves it was definitely going to be an uphill struggle. Both the threat from the tanks and the Eversor couldn't be ignored and had to be neutralised, I had no choice but to deal with them. This also meant I ended up chasing around from one end of the battlefield to the other. On the other hand, the Swooping Hawks very nearly succeeded in their mission, only to be thwarted by massed overwatch fire, a self-sacrificing trooper and a really unlucky dice roll. Still it was the high point (pun intended) of the battle for me, although killing the Eversor and smashing up that pesky Hellhound were great too. Being the only psyker on the board was a bit problematical, though the powers I used most only needed 1 force card each.

Mistakes? Loads of 'em really! Well, firstly the reserve rule really caught me out, I never expected Ian to bring his tanks on so far out on a limb like that (it cost me the battle in the end, to be honest). Also I underestimated the Imperial Guard's massed firepower. It's



The Imperial Guard battle line storms the objective, while the big guns finally spell the end for the Avatar.

a bit like with the Orks really, they're no good on their own but get a load together and it's a different story. With so many guns firing the overwatch rules are particularly deadly as well, and the Swooping Hawks got toasted.

Army selection wise, I might have been better off taking some Exarchs along for the ride or even some of the Phoenix Lords – Fuegan maybe, or Maugan Ra. The Avatar was great to have for the scrap even though his luck ran out on the last turn. In hindsight though, the Farseer was more than capable of doing over both the Assassin and the Hellhound, so the 300 points the Avatar cost could have been better spent, especially in a 1500 point battle. In the end I would definitely take an all Aspect army again, only I think this time I would take some Exarchs, a lot more Dire Avengers, and maybe some of the Shining Spears I'm converting.

MISSION COMPLETE

Ian: As the smoke cleared, it become obvious that the surviving Eldar had quit the field, Imperial Guard command sections began to push forward to secure the battlefield and recce the mission objective. All in all, high command would be very pleased. The objective had been taken and the Eldar beaten from the field with a very high casualty rate. Our own casualties were very low, and as far as I could tell the Eldar's daemonic Avatar has been destroyed. I even managed to stay in one piece myself. That reminds me, Trooper Yager deserves a posthumous medal for bravery, that was a pretty close call!

So everything went according to plan, I exploited every single mistake that Adrian made, resulting in the perfect Warhammer 40,000 victory. Well no not at all actually. (by tournament standards this wouldn't even get me a maximum twenty points). The Eversor Assassin was a complete debacle.

In game terms it was fairly inevitable that these two characters (the Eversor and the Avatar) would be facing each other at some point. Well I could have spent the entire game running away from the Avatar, but that wouldn't have looked very good now would it? No, my big disappointment is that, in background terms, it is fairly obvious that the Eversor completely failed in his mission. I imagine that he was probably sent to dispatch the Farseer. However, blessed with the ability of hindsight, the Farseer brought his bodyguard with him. Perhaps next time I should save such powerful characters for a slightly larger game, say 2000 to 3000 points. That way the effect they have on the game will not be as drastic.

On the whole though, the Eversor did hold the Avatar's attention for three whole turns. Without him the Avatar would have just destroyed my troops wholesale. Plus it caused Adrian to split his assault force up right at the start of the game. If the Banshees and the Scorpions had the Avatar with them, Adrian might have felt more inclined to press home his attack, despite the casualties caused by the Hellhound.

The ploy of not having a psyker in my force worked a treat and left Adrian's Farseer virtually powerless throughout the battle. Eldar Farseers are some of the best psykers in the Warhammer 40,000 universe. This is partly due to how deadly the Eldar powers are, usually affecting the enemy in a very subtle manner. Take the *Doom* power for instance. Once cast it virtually doubles the effectiveness of any attacks made against the *Doomed* target. While powers like *Eldritch Storm* can disrupt stationary squads. This causes havoc amongst heavy weapon teams and support weapons, allowing the Eldar hand-to-hand troops to close. As you can imagine these are game winning ploys and the fact that I denied Adrian this capability is probably as much to do with my victory as the initial strike by the tanks.

WARHAMMER

THE LURKING HORROR

By
Mark Brendan
and
Ian Pickstock

JUST A GAME

Ian: I am, of course, going to cheat by writing this introduction last. This month's battle report is a clash between Tyranids and Space Wolves. Although this was just a straight fight between the two adversaries, by the time I had finished fighting the battle I was so taken by how enjoyable a game it was that I began to develop a long and involved plot for it. Needless to say this snowballed into something far too big to present here, today. Maybe I might get an opportunity to show some of my ideas in a future White Dwarf article, or Mark and I might just fight it out as a campaign for our own gratification. Who knows? Of one thing I can be sure, this battle will form a pivotal part of the story and I was amazed at all the ideas and plots we came up with just from this one game.

Why don't you have a go yourself? Play a game and see what plots, intrigues and conspiracies you can come up with. Mark has dropped a clue or two in the story below, and if you're canny you might just pick them up. In the meantime, I hope you enjoy this month's battle report.

Thunderheads boiled up from the lofty peaks of Asaheim's mountains, and crowned the fortress of the Fang with a bristling wreath of lightning bolts. The atmosphere was dark and oppressive and nothing moved on the exterior of the colossal, baroque building. The Thunderwolf, Drekan, was unusually restless on this dark evening.

Deep within the mighty edifice, the Lair of Blackmane rang with the din of raucous celebration. And such a great clangor it was that you might be forgiven for thinking they put Drekan to shame with their noise. In the Long Hall a number of the Space Wolves' young warriors were being treated to a rare privilege, for these Space Marines were feasting in the presence of their Lord, the legendary Ragnar Blackmane. The celebration was in their honour, and it was both their initiation and their reward for a proven record of efficiency and valour in combat. They had taken part in a raid on the vile heretic Kardrin Kain's headquarters at Yggdrasil, near Cadia. Despite many horrors, and coming face to face with the most unspeakable of abominations, the young Blood Claws had shown their mettle, and pitched into the purge of that Emperor forsaken place with gusto. Many of them had, of course, been summarily dismembered by daemons, or raked down by the withering firepower from Imperial weapon emplacements held by the cultists. But at the end of the day's fighting Kardrin Kain's head decorated the central plaza of Yggdrasil's capital, to serve as a warning to the people of that world of what befell those swayed by the influence of the Eye of Terror.

But the strife was behind them now and glory and honour was theirs. For on this night they had become Grey Hunters. At one end of the hall speakers vied for prestige as the best storytellers by recounting the more memorable events from the mission, whilst the centre of the room was dominated by big, power armoured men trying to wrestle one another to the floor. This upset the hulking wolves who stalked around the chamber trying to clear the floor of as much discarded raw meat and spilled ale as they could manage. Being landed upon by a fully armoured Space Marine did not improve their chances of succeeding in this singularly valuable task. At the head of the table Ragnar presided over a massive drinking contest. This worked in an unusual way since Space Marines were bio-engineered to resist poisons. The trick was to drink so fast, and at such dangerous alcohol percentages, that their immune response could not hope to compensate. This changed the goal posts for drinking contest winning rules. In fact it was the first Space Marine to pass out who was deemed the winner, since he was shown to possess the greatest capacity and speed. A great cheer rose from the assembly as one of the newly ordained Grey Hunters began to sway dangerously. His eyes rolled back into his skull, and he slowly toppled backwards through a trestle table laden with drinking horns and raw giblets.

"We have a winner!", bellowed Ragnar, and pitched the contents of his drinking vessel over the recumbent Space Wolf. This merely served to make him stir slightly and a beatific smile to spread across his face when one of the giant wolves padded over to lick the beer from his head. Then, the metallic drone of a Servator's voice cut through the sounds of revelry. The Space Wolves were instantly alert and ready to act.

"Lord Blackmane," announced the eerie, disembodied voice from the intercom, "Great Wolf Grimnar requires your presence in the Inner Sanctum in five minutes. You are to be accompanied by seven of your most capable Wolf Guard."

After Ragnar had stalked out of the hall, along with a group of his right hand men, the room buzzed with low, murmured conversation as the Space Marines wondered what this summons could portend. They didn't wonder for long.

Twenty minutes later Ragnar prowled back into the hall with a feral grin carved onto his features. In the dim light of the hall his eyes glimmered faintly beneath his dark brow and the pearly white of his elongated canines flashed as he spoke.

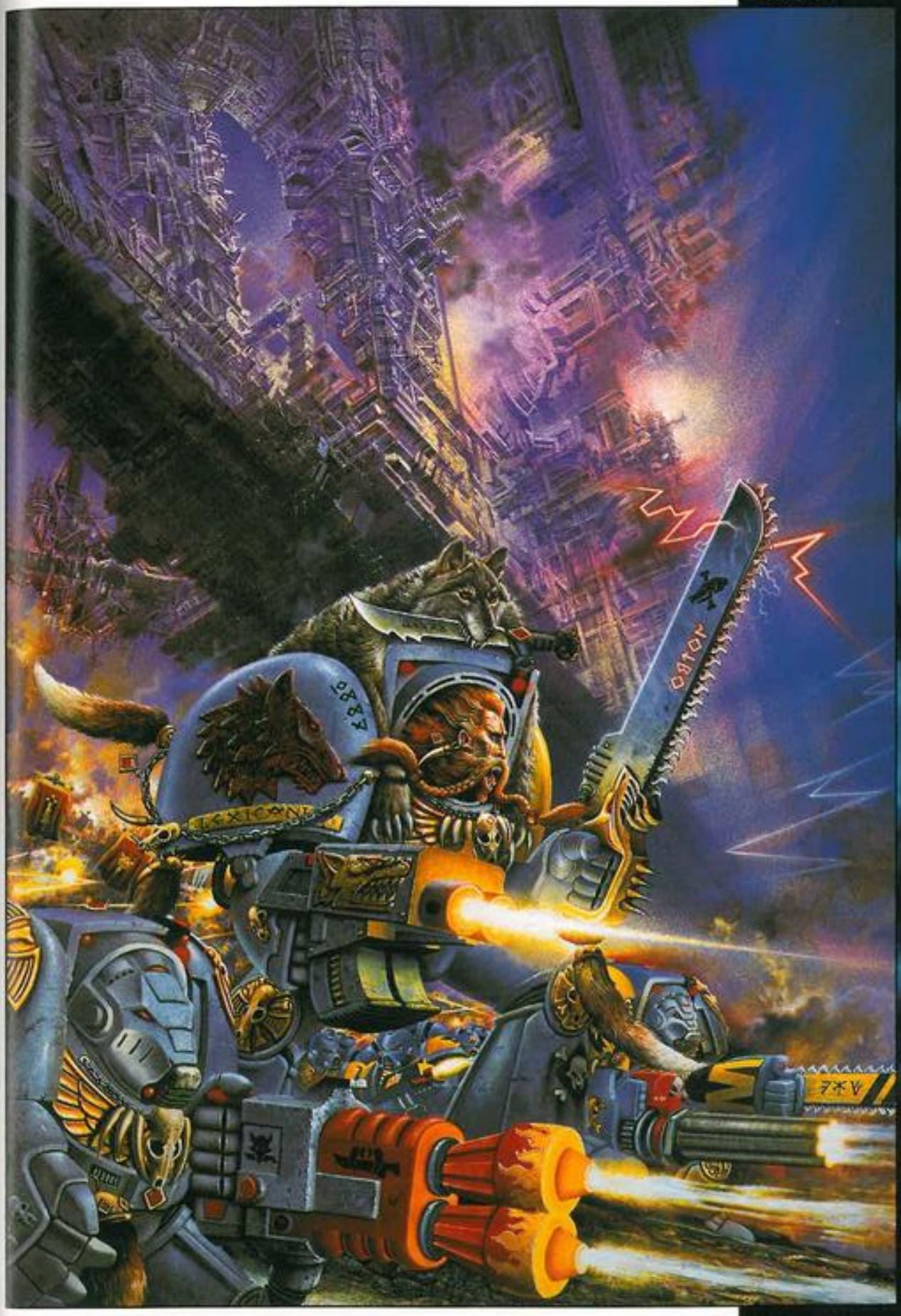
"Battle brothers," this simple statement was greeted with a hoarse cheer from the assembly.

"Battle brothers," Ragnar continued, "we have a new mission."

Here he waited for the yelling and whooping to stop and the import to sink in.

"An unidentified vessel briefly appeared on the Astronomican matrices and was the lost again. Technomagi have located the ship's distress beacon on an uninhabited world roughly 150 light years from here, and scans reveal it to be carrying genetic data from Ymgarl thought to have been lost millennia ago. However, their intelligence also reveals Tyranid infestation of the world. We believe we are dealing with an isolated pocket of the monsters, but the cargo containers must be retrieved before a virus bombing can proceed. Fellow warriors, this is where we are best employed. Glory to the Emperor! Oblivion to our enemies!

"The hunt begins with the rising of the sun, and some of you will die. But for now?", once more he paused for effect. "Drink!"


CAYOR
LEXICON

BATTLE REPORT BLUES

Mark: It was late on a Friday afternoon in the Dwarf Bunker as I sat innocently clicking away at an article I was working on. The others were in a huddle nearby discussing what to do for the new battle report and I wasn't really concentrating on what they were saying. Suddenly, everyone stood up and the Grand Warlord made his indomitable presence felt over my shoulder *(that'll be the bad breath - Ed)*.

"You usually fight with a Tyranid army, don't you Mark?" he asked in a completely off the cuff fashion.

"Indeed!" I replied enthusiastically.

"Do you reckon you know how to use them properly?" queried Jake, who had joined Adrian by this point.

"Of course," says I, confidently.

"Excellent! You're doing the next battle report," Jake beamed. "Against the Space Wolves."

Aargh!

INVASION

Mark: It has to be said that I had really been looking forward to fighting my first battle report. However, there was, I admit, a certain degree of trepidation over how I would perform against such seasoned veterans as the Dwarf crew. But Space Wolves? This one was going to be even more difficult than I anticipated. My swarms have clashed with Space Wolves in the past and I have always come off worse. I genuinely consider them to be the toughest opponents a Tyranid swarm could have the misfortune to run into. All Space Marines can be a problem for the Tyranids, because let's face it, any swarm you care to pick is going to be hopelessly outgunned. But that's what happens to Tyranids, and you've just got to weather the storm until you can get in close, and then calmly remove all the meat from inside those brittle shells they wear. You just can't do that to Space Wolves though. They are every bit as fearsome up close as they are with ranged combat.

We would be playing with 1500 points each. Not the world's largest swarm, and not a great deal of room to create the right mix of bio-constructs to deal with all eventualities. Nonetheless, I set to creating the meanest bunch of flesh rending, razor-edged, death dealing alien terrors this side of the Galactic Fringe. Then I checked my force list against available models. Bah! Back to the drawing board. The worst disappointment was that I only had one Lictor available. This is a creature I rate very highly and even in a battle this small I would have liked to have two of them.

Anyway, on to the swarm itself. The core of any Tyranid swarm, and your mandatory purchase, always has to be its Hive Tyrant. For this battle, and anything up to about 3,000 points, I would say that one would suffice (in this case one was all I was allowed within the points limitations anyway). Since I was fighting Space Marines, and knowing Ian's predilection for tanks, I chose to arm it with a venom cannon. I don't rate the barbed strangler at all against Space Marines, since it has trouble penetrating their armour even if it does succeed in wounding them. Next up were the biomorphs. The *Voltage Field* is, in my opinion, one of the best force fields in the game, and when you are expecting to draw a lot of heavy weapon fire, as the Hive Tyrant does, it offers better survival odds than a *Warp Field* for half the cost. Next I chose a *Null Zone* to protect me from psychic attacks and any sneaky *Vortex Grenades* which might be lobbed in my direction. Finally I selected my psychic powers and took *Psychic Scream* and *Catalyst*. A truly awesome, and expensive, critter. Or so I thought.

To complement the Hive Tyrant I selected a Lictor bred with a *Voltage Field*. Lictors are infiltrators *par excellence* and you can't have too many of them. I also took a Zoanthrope because they can waste tanks like nobody's business.

On to the Support section of the swarm. Just one entry here, a Carnifex sporting *Adrenaline Sacs* and a *Voltage Field*. The increasingly inevitable *Voltage Field* biomorph, combined with the magnificent armour, Toughness and Wounds of the Carnifex, make it practically unkillable by normal weapon fire, and the *Adrenaline Sacs* would allow it to run and fire on one of its turns.

Finally to the Broods. This is where I always feel spoilt for choice and never have enough points to get exactly the right combination for my needs. But hey-ho, away we go. As usual, I overspent totally and then had to wield the hatchet, a torturous process involving many arcane sums and wholesale shifting of points. In the end I emerged with this: four Tyranid Warriors, all armed for ranged combat, two with devourers for getting in close and dirty, a deathspitter to chastise the Space Marines from afar, and a venom cannon to discourage the anticipated tanks and Wolf Guard Terminators. These brutes had evolved *Hardened Carapaces* to put the kibosh on all that pesky bolter fire. Then came the foot

soldiers: ten Hormagaunts to provide a skirmish screen for the Genestealers I hoped to purchase, and two largish broods of Termagants, one of ten and one of eight, all armed with fleshborers – not a bad weapon against Space Marines if you have enough of them and can get close enough to use them. Finally, I spent my remaining points on a brood of nine Genestealers.

THE PLAN

In a nutshell, my plan was to fend off the tanks I expected with my venom cannons and Zoanthrope, while the rest of my insectile brethren did what they do best, ie strew people's squashy parts across a wide range of terrain features. After some discussion with Jake, we then selected our missions. Ian received a *Take and Hold* mission for the Space Wolves, with some cargo crates containing as yet unknown salvage as the objective. For my part, I drew the *Trap* mission. Hooray! This one's my favourite and it gives the opportunity for the Tyranids to actually inflict a bit of damage in the first couple of turns.

My rolls on the Tyranid Strategy tables turned up a mixture of trials and misfortunes for the Space Wolves, including "Jonas" acting strangely amongst the Wolf Guard, a small Tyranid organism lurking aboard one of the Predators, and a Grey Hunter squad scared stiff by the Tyranids.

Deployment next, and I had to set up first. This is the usual story with Tyranids, and is probably their worst drawback, but that wasn't the half of it. Disaster was looming already as I only managed to get two of my broods to deploy on the flank, not enough to create any sort of telling strike force and make the *Trap* viable. In a vain attempt to compensate, I spread out across the whole front line of my deployment zone, enabling me to hopefully cover all eventualities. Ian then proceeded to ignore my dispersed set up and deployed in a tight, lethal looking Space Marine force aimed at the rather pathetic flank units strung out on my right. Ho hum.

TYRANID KEY

- Hive Tyrant
- Carnifex
- Lictor
- Zoanthrope
- Tyranid Warriors
- Genestealers
- Termagants
- Termagants
- Hormagaunts

"It's not very often you get to fight a battle report using your favourite army."

SPACE WOLVES

Ian: Having spent the weekend swanning around Antwerp at a gaming convention, drinking free beer and eating free food (thanks guys!), I arrived back at work a day late only to find out that I had been nominated to do the battle report with Mark. Hmm, I thought, battle reports involve lots of work and can be a bit of hassle. Oh well, I suppose if it's my turn. But then I found out it was Tyranids versus Space Wolves. Hooray! It's not very often that you get to fight a battle report using your favourite army.

I had a quick chat with Mark about the forthcoming clash, and he informed me that he was an experienced Tyranid player, but he hated playing against Space Wolves. So why did Mark hate the Space Wolves so much? Well, it's quite simple really. Most Tyranids players accept the fact that they are going to get shot to pieces in the first couple of turns, but then they get to rip you to bits in the final part of the game. Unfortunately things ain't so rosy when Tyranids fight against Space Wolves. Not only do Space Wolves shoot you to pieces with the typical awesome firepower of a Space Marine army, but they ain't no slouches when it comes to hand-to-hand either. Almost every single Space Wolf in the army has an additional +1 to their Weapon Skill. While this isn't exactly going to do you much good against a Genestealer, the lesser hand-to-hand troops like Hormagaunts, and their screening troops such as Termagants and Gargoyles, can be cut down in short order. Against normal Space Marines these troops would have been on an equal footing (in the case of Hormagaunts, better), but not so against the Brothers of Fenris.

WOLF GUARD CHAMPIONS

A favourite gambit of mine is to have Wolf Guard Champions in Terminator armour leading all my squads. Credit has to go to Andy C for this, as it was his idea to use them in the *Fangs of the Wolf* battle report, and to quote the man himself: "this would give each squad, in effect, a small Dreadnought to support them."

THE PLAN

This particular combination of missions is exceedingly deadly. While the Tyranids have *The Trap* and must encircle my forces, I am lumbered

GREY HUNTERS

I always include a squad of Grey Hunters – it is essential to have a good core for your army. With so many specialist troops available it is all too easy to end up with an over specialised force. Grey Hunters are the Space Wolves' equivalent of tactical squads, and provide your army with a flexible body of troops that can lay down a curtain of firepower and provide punch in hand-to-hand.

The ability to have what is essentially a tactical squad of Space Marines equipped with assault weapons is more preferable then having heavy and special weapon troopers. The heavy weapon usually forces one combat squad to remain stationary, while the special weapon in the other combat squad forces it to advance towards the enemy. With the Grey Hunters I can have them work together a lot more closely. I equip one battle pack with assault weapons, while the others have their standard bolter armament. The "assault" pack can move forward, while the "bolter" pack provide covering fire. Once the assault pack is in position they can hold off the enemy with their rapid firing bolters while the rest of their brothers join them.

KEY

- Grey Hunter Assault
- Grey Hunter Bolter
- Wolf Guard Champion

PREDATOR SQUADRON

Fighting against Tyranids I knew that I would be facing some monstrous opponents, so some heavy firepower was called for – a squad of Long Fangs, perhaps. However, during the night before the battle, I was tossing and turning and awoke in a cold sweat. I realised I was making a grave error. What was I thinking of, only one tank? This was a nightmare, a nightmare that I had lived through once before in *The Great Devourer* battle report. I made a quick mental calculation. I could scrap the Long Fangs and exchange them for more tanks! In the end, I took an impressive squadron of three Predator variants. Not only did they carry awesome amounts of firepower, but they would give me a psychological edge. Once Mark saw my army I'm sure my little squadron would remain foremost in his thoughts. I decided to give my other two Predators nicknames to go with *the Annihilator*. I dubbed the twin-linked lascannon with heavy bolters *the Eradicator*, while the Razorback-type configuration is called *the Destroyer*.

with *Take and Hold*. This throws up something of a paradox. To complete my mission I must advance into the centre of the table, hardly the most sensible thing to do when the enemy is trying to surround you!

That said, I had a plan. I would employ my tanks to hunt down any psykers and major threats, like Carnifexes and Hive Tyrants. Meanwhile, my Wolf Guard would take the objective, the Grey Hunters swinging around to guard their flank.

RAGNAR'S WOLF GUARD

Finally, I went for Ragnar Blackmane to lead my merry band – well he is the only Wolf Lord in our army. However I mustn't moan, as I consider him to be one of the best of all the Space Marine special characters His enhanced profile and Berserk Charge meant that he would be able to go toe-to-toe with a Hive Tyrant!

To accompany Ragnar I chose a bodyguard of four Wolf Guard in power armour, and added another Wolf Guard champion in Terminator armour to lead them. These veteran Space Wolves are just the ticket for leading assaults against Tyranids.

KEY

Ragnar Wolf Guard

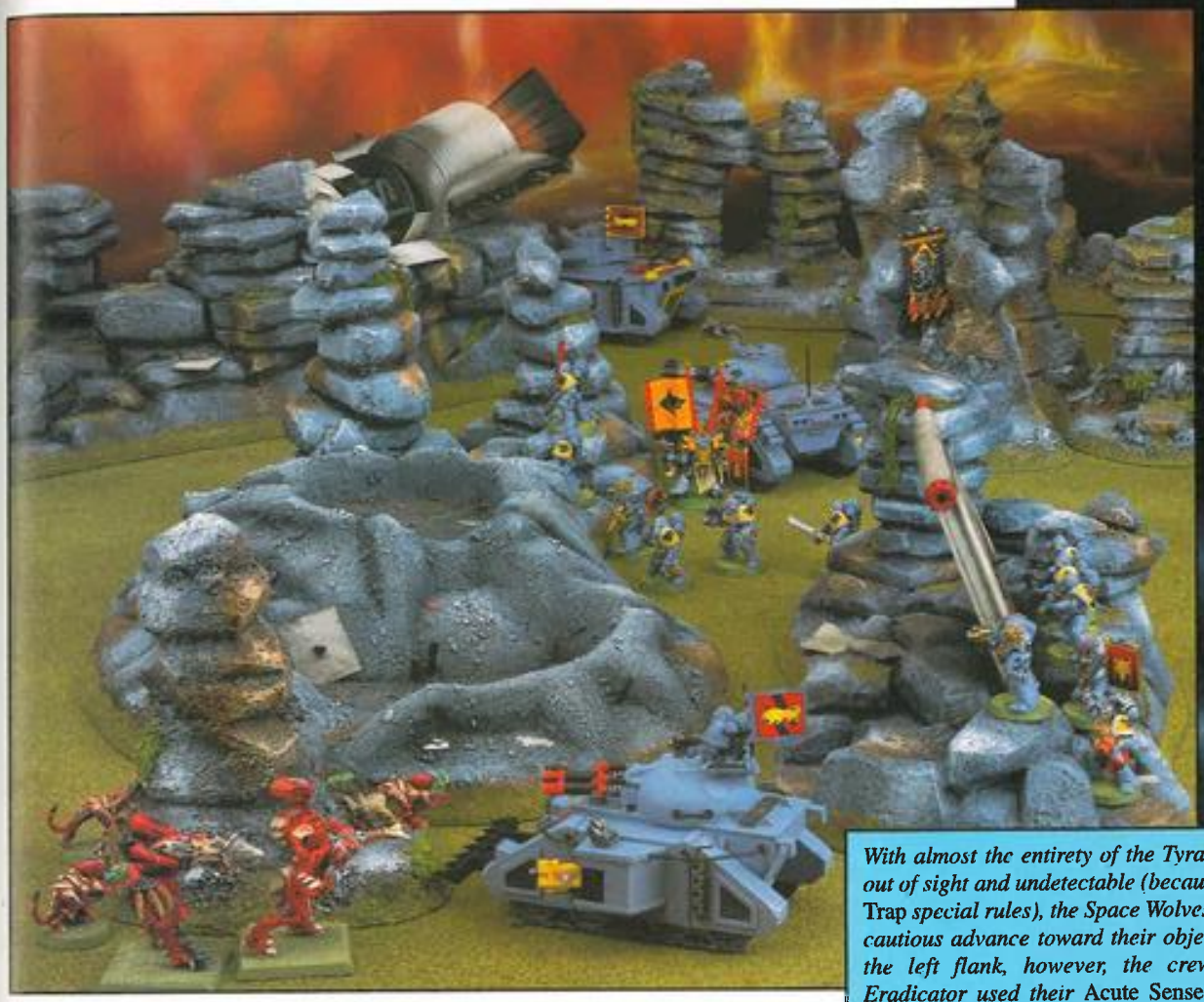
SPACE WOLVES TURN 1

Ian: The special hidden deployment rules that Tyranids have made this a very tricky first turn. First on the hit list was the Zoanthrope, as it posed a real danger to my tanks. I couldn't just blast away as I couldn't see any targets, and if I moved into position with my tanks to shoot things in my next turn, they would get blasted by the Zoanthrope. Situations like these often arise at the start of the battle and it is all too easy to hunker down in your deployment zone and set overwatch. However, I find that this rarely achieves anything. All you are doing is wasting a turn. In a game against Tyranids, where you are only likely to get a couple of turns before you're embroiled in vicious hand-to-hand combats, this is time you can ill afford to waste.

I had a mission to complete and if I couldn't shoot any of the Tyranids then I would improve my position. I placed the Grey Hunters on the left flank, and the Wolf Guard squad hiding in the rocks, onto overwatch The assault pack of Grey Hunters was sent running forward, braving the overwatch fire of the Tyranid Warriors. This attracted the attention of Mark's Tyranid with the Venom Cannon, but much to its surprise, and my fortune, the Tyranid found its ammunition genetically incompatible with its Venom Cannon, which consequently blew up in its face, slaying the vile creature instantly. Well, my gamble had paid off big time. I was hoping to get away with a miss or a bad bunch of rolls for the Venom Cannon template, but having the thing blow up in the aberration's face suited me just fine.

Both the Annihilator and the Destroyer rumbled forward, but still remained out of sight of the enemy, ready to strike next turn. However, I wasn't going to let the Tyranids get off totally scot-free this turn. His meagre flank forces were far too tempting, so I sent the Eradicator sweeping forward at combat speed, straight into the jaws of the enemy. The Space Wolves' *Acute Senses* gave the tank crew a huge spotting distance of 8" so I was able to spot all the Tyranid Warriors, and proceeded to rake them with heavy

Mark explains to Warwick just how cunning his plan is.



With almost the entirety of the Tyranid force out of sight and undetectable (because of The Trap *special rules), the Space Wolves began a cautious advance toward their objective. On the left flank, however, the crew of the Eradicator used their* Acute Senses *to sniff out the Tyranid's flank forces. The gunners wasted no time taking appropriate action, showing the vile abominations the business end of a twin-linked lascannon.*

bolters and twin-linked lascannons. Two fell to the heavy explosive bolts, but the twin-linked lascannon shots, probably distracted by the Tyranids' overwatch fire, fell wide of their mark.

A weak warp flux only gave Mark enough power for his Zoanthrope to cast a single point warp blast aimed at one of the Grey Hunters, but even that proved to be out of range.

TYRANID TURN 1

Mark: The armoured might of the Space Wolves rumbled rapidly off its baseline, and the Tyranids concealed in the sparse undergrowth began to take notice. A Predator rumbled right up to the Tyranid brood's hiding place and began to level its guns. Unfortunately, the venom cannon was covering the wrong field of fire to react in time, so it fell to the Tyranid Warrior wielding the deathspitter to attempt an all or nothing shot, maybe taking out a track before the vehicle's weapons delivered their deadly payload. But it was to no avail as the caustic larva was ejected to sail clean over the top of the tank. Meanwhile, the Tyranid Warrior sporting the venom cannon had spotted a squad of Grey Hunters running across the corridor of open ground between two towering mesas of crumbling rock, and stood up to let fly a volley of toxic crystals at them. Luck was definitely not on my side today. The shot missed and the Scatter and Artillery dice indicated a hit and a misfire. The weapon exploded in the hapless Tyranids claws and blew it to smithereens. One heavy weapon down already from my meagre artillery contingent, and three tanks to face.

The Space Wolves overwatch proved to be far more effective than mine. As my flanking force of Termagants moved out of their hiding place, the Grey Hunter's bolters chattered into life, cutting down half of the brood.

My forces began to move off their starting positions, but Ian stitched me up really badly with one of the new strategy cards, *Surprise Attack,* preventing me from running or charging in my first turn. It was a fairly depressing turn of events. The remnants of my Tyranid brood were looking straight at a tank bristling with heavy weapons, which was almost on top of them I might add, and they couldn't even take the one sensible

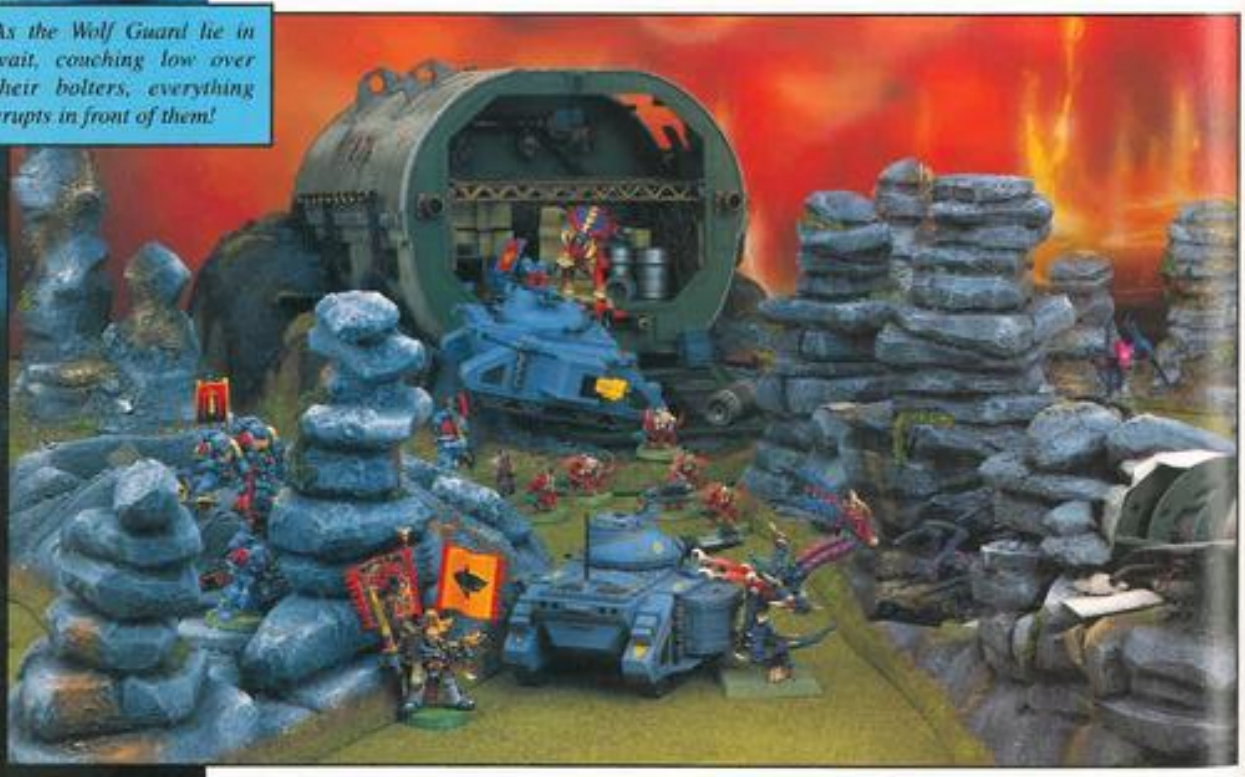
TURN 1 VPs
TYRANIDS: 0
SPACE WOLVES: 1

position in its nest of rocks in the centre of the field. The Tyranid Warriors attempted to make as decent an account of themselves as possible, before the tank flattened them for good. So the coughing, racking din of the deathspitter rang out around the rocks once more, this time felling two Grey Hunters, whilst a writhing stream of maggots from the devourer ran out of impetus half an inch in front of the same Grey Hunter position. Finally the psychic Zoanthrope summoned up the latent energy of the warp, directing it against the Annihilator, but somehow the effect was nullified even though the Space Wolves had no Rune Priest. Bah!

option available to them in such a dire situation – charging it and tearing its tracks off. The Carnifex was also stranded in limbo, facing off against another tank, and unable to run towards it to close the distance between them. It couldn't even burn its adrenaline sac to get close enough to hurl some bio plasma effectively. I opted instead to merely pivot on the spot to bring my arc of fire round on the tank, and unleashed a coruscating gout of super energised bile at it, which exploded harmlessly far behind. The other elements of the swarm moved as far as they could, seething forward en masse while the Lictor took up a better

SPACE WOLVES TURN 2

Ian: Now that Mark had stopped lurking in the long grasses and rocks I could set about getting to grips with him properly. Unfortunately, it was at this point that a tiny skulker nesting beneath the driver's seat of the Eradicator chose to make its presence felt. The tiny bio-construct launched itself at the throat of the Grey Hunter driver. Fortunately, the hardened Space Marine warrior



As the Wolf Guard lie in wait, couching low over their bolters, everything erupts in front of them!

was easily able to tear the small bio-construct in half. However, this caused him to lose complete control of the vehicle, and he only just managed to pull it around a large rocky spire before running over two Termagants. Luckily, this route took me directly past the Zoanthrope. The turret gunner, unwise to the events taking place in the driver's compartment, swung the twin-linked lascannon to bear on the foul mutant and promptly vapourised it! The Predator Annihilator also kicked up a gear and began an advance down the rocky canyon. With the demise of the Zoanthrope, the only viable target was the second brood of Termagants. Despite the turret gunner popping open his hatch and cocking his storm bolter in order to increase the number of potential kills, the awesome arsenal of the Predator Annihilator only succeeded in killing one of the Termagants. The Grey Hunter assault pack dealt with another, while the bolter pack, using their tremendous *Rapid Fire* skill, killed the remainder of the first Brood.

In the first turn I had foolishly left Ragnar standing still, when seeing as he was the only one who could effectively deal with the Lictor I should have moved him towards the creature's hiding place. I remedied this and ran Ragnar behind the Annihilator. It was at this point I realised that I was too late and that this mistake was going to cost me the Predator Annihilator!

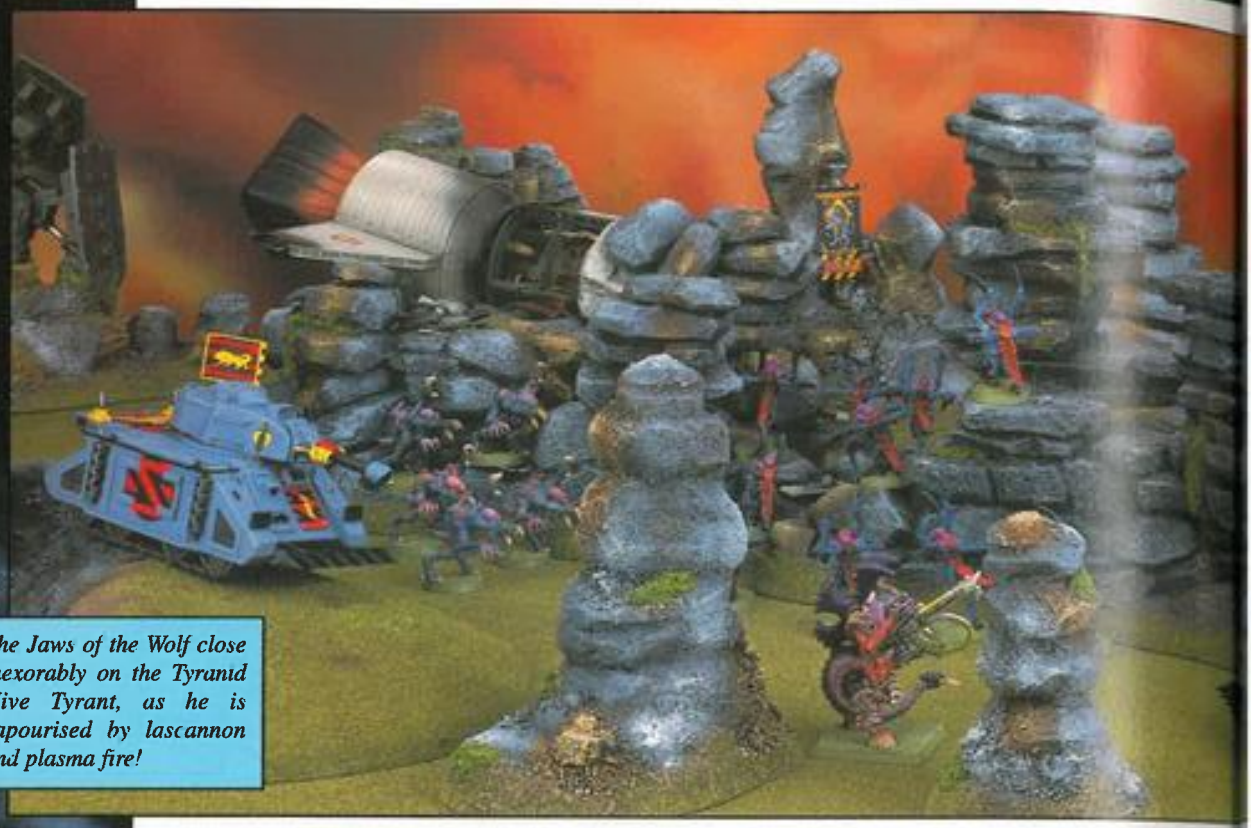
With the destruction of the Zoanthrope, the Hive Tyrant found the warp flux of insufficient strength to use any of his powers.

TYRANID TURN 2

Mark: The Space Wolves tanks were proving to be a big problem – Ian was doing a very good job of eliminating effective threats to his precious vehicles. I don't think Ian fully understood how effective Lictors were at avoiding detection, but with Ragnar heading my way I knew that he was now only too aware of the dangers that the creature posed. It was now or never, I had to get my points worth out of the Lictor and the Annihilator would do nicely. Recovering from the Space Wolves surprise attack, the Carnifex hurtled forward with a surprising turn of speed and motion, aggressively charged chemicals flooding its nervous system from the *Adrenaline Sac*. The Carnifex launched itself across the open ground, its short legs propelling it toward the Destroyer before disgorging its bio-plasma at the despised metal machine. However, much to my consternation, the scintillating ball of bile and plasma sailed behind the fast moving vehicle. This trend was to continue as my surviving Tyranid Warrior failed to catch any of the Grey Hunters with its deathspitter blast. But worst of all was the Hive Tyrant, who managed to miss his target despite his massive Ballistic Skill. Fortunately though, the large template of the venom cannon still clipped the Eradicator's track, sending it spinning out of control again.

TURN 2 VPs
TYRANIDS: 4
SPACE WOLVES: 3

The Lictor whirled into an unstoppable assault on the Predator Annihilator, diamond hard chitinous limbs cleaving their way through the sponson and track, before tearing into the engine compartment,



The Jaws of the Wolf close inexorably on the Tyranid Hive Tyrant, as he is vapourised by lascannon and plasma fire!

triggering a massive explosion. Unable to react quickly enough, and not used to such volatile behaviour in metal objects, the Lictor was caught in the blast, suffering a wound as the tank went up. A hail of burning shrapnel peppered Ragnar, but despite the bulk of his power armour, Ragnar's preternatural agility kept him free from harm as he dodged all the projectiles.

With psychic forces now crippled by only rolling one dice in the psychic phase, I was left with playing the *Catalyst* on my Genestealers. This would super-charge them ready for an assault next turn. Ian's rather unreasonable ability to nullify everything I attempted didn't work this turn as I used *Ultimate Force* to channel the power!

SPACE WOLVES TURN 3

Ian: Well the battle looked to be going my way. However, after a quick totting up of the victory points I realised that I was losing. What I did have going for me though, was a good command of the battlefield. After a few well timed gambles my troops were all in really good positions. With the Tyranids now within their 12" charge range, all I had to do was sit tight and hope that I got a good round of shooting in, before the first waves of Tyranids began their assault.

But hold on a minute, "within their 12" charge range… " A drastic, yet heroic plan of action had just occurred to me…

Raising his head high, Ragnar let forth a guttural wolf howl that resonated across the entire battlefield. **Awwwoooooooooo…**

All the Space Wolves were suddenly suffused with the

ancient energies of the Wulfen, the monster of Fenris that lies within the soul of every Space Wolf. All the Space Wolves charged forward towards the enemy. The Grey Hunter bolter pack charged towards the Tyranid Warrior, but only the Wolf Guard Terminator made it into contact with the alien beast, smashing through its hardened carapace with his power fist and crushing the life out of its foul heart. The Grey Hunter assault pack fell upon the Termagant brood and made short work of chopping them down. Meanwhile the Wolf Guard had the tough task of charging into the jaws of the Hormagaunts. The Hormagaunts were not much of a problem, but the Genestealers behind them would prove to be a more tricky proposition.

As the Hormagaunts fell under the savage assault of the Wolf Guard, Mark, who well knew that Wolf Guard have a Weapon Skill of six still insisted on crying out in dismay at the Wolf Guard's outrageous stat-line. As one of his best assault broods was hacked to pieces, all the Wolf Guard followed up to attack the rest of the Hormagaunts in the next turn.

Unfortunately, the very man who invoked this frenzied charge failed his *fear* test and Ragnar Blackmane had to content himself with trying to out stare the Lictor, instead of doing his job, which is cleaving the beast in two with *Frostfang*.

On the armoured front, my two remaining tanks continued their out-flanking manoeuvre. The Destroyer did so out of its own volition. The Predator Eradicator, however, had had its track shredded and was moving dangerously out of control. The heroic Grey Hunter driver proved his worth once more and managed to wrench the crippled tank to the right and toward the heart of the battle, before track links and wreckage clogged the drive mechanism bringing the tank to a permanent halt. Its heavy bolter spat forth explosive bolts felling two of the Hormagaunts that were following up the rest of their unfortunate brood. However, the sudden halt of the tank must have spoiled the turrets gunner's aim as he sent twin bolts of laser fire way over the head of the looming Hive Tyrant.

The Destroyer moved in from the other flank. The Jaws of the Wolf were closing ever tighter, and soon I would have my prey. With plasma guns fully charged, the gunner let rip. The Hive Tyrant was bathed in plasma and laser energy, a coruscating ball of destruction that nothing could survive. When the fires died down, all that remained of the Tyranid army's leader was charred flesh and shards of chitinous armour.

I looked on in glee. I knew this was possibly the rashest if not stupidest thing to do in the battle. Using Ragnar's Battle Howl against the Tyranids was forsaking my tactical sensibilities to make things look good, but I just couldn't resist it. This was truly the stuff that great sagas were made of, and everything was going according to plan. The Grey Hunters had annihilated their opponents, and the Wolf Guard had, much to Mark's dismay, cut through his prized Hormagaunts. All I had to face now were the Genestealers…

TYRANID TURN 3

Mark: Dur… gth… bu… What can I say, I'm lost for words. That's the last thing I expected Ian to do. Well, after that there was little option but to join in the fray. Ian had successfully crippled a large part of my assault troops by being able to

The Wolf Guard embroiled in a deadly melee with Hormagaunts. Time is short for the veteran Wolf Brothers as the Genestealers move in for the kill.

choose who he would assault, attacking them on his own terms and negating my advantage of numbers. If I had charged I would have been able to gang up on his Space Marines. To add insult to injury, the Hive Tyrant was slain. Yet another key element of my swarm reduced to ashes.

Blast it, I thought, as I moved the surviving Hormagaunts in around the Wolf Guard. The Space Wolves were now firmly placed in a narrow pass through a rocky gorge. The narrow front meant that I was only able to get a couple of Genestealers into hand-to-hand combat. I sent four Genestealers to attack the Predator Destroyer and the rest closed in behind the fray in the gorge. Their powerful talons tore apart the tank in short order.

TURN 3 VPs
TYRANIDS: 8
SPACE WOLVES: 7

My dice rolls for the following hand-to-hand let me down badly. While I expected the Hormagaunts to be cut down, I thought I might at least manage to take a few Wolf Guard out with sheer weight of numbers. But alas it was not to be. All the Wolf Guard but two dispatched their opponents. One of the two was shredded by the claws of a Genestealer, while the other was trapped in a stalemate with another. The blighters then proceeded to follow up into the cover of the rocks, ready to spray my Genestealers with rapid fire from their bolters in the following turn.

The Lictor struck out against the Space Wolves' commander with its usual ferocity, but this Space Marine was proving to be every bit as tricky as I had feared. With increasing annoyance I watched as Ragnar deftly parried and dodged his way around the razor sharp claws of the Lictor.

On my right flank, the last remaining Tyranid Warrior used its monstrous size to easily shrug off the Space Wolf Terminator and spun round to spray the Grey Hunters with its devourer. Two of the Space Marine warriors fell screaming in agony as flesh eating worms poured from the joints of their power armour and eye sockets. The remaining Grey Hunter and Wolf Guard champion were severely shaken by the disgusting demise of their brethren.

SPACE WOLVES TURN 4

Ian: In the last hand-to-hand combat phase I had successfully extricated myself from the lethal melee with the Hormagaunts and Genestealers. Brother Egil was the only casualty, but as he had led the assault from the front he had found himself hopelessly surrounded by Genestealers. His bolt pistol spat fire until the very last, when the razor sharp claws ripped open his armour and tore into his flesh. Egil had earned his place in the great sagas. Seeking vengeance for the loss of a brother, the remaining Wolf Guard opened up with their bolt guns and storm bolters. The rain of rapid firing bolters cut down three of the monstrosities. Further down the canyon, the Grey Hunter assault pack had closed in to support the Wolf Guard, their bolters bringing down the last of the Genestealers in the gorge. From his position, the Wolf Guard Terminator could see their objective and informed the others over the comm-net that their mission was now almost complete.

The now stationary Predator Eradicator spotted

the massive form the Carnifex moving forward through a rocky outcrop. The gunner swung the twin-linked lascannon to bear upon the creature, but his aim was off and the laser bolts blasted into the side of the rock.

TYRANID TURN 4

Mark: At this point, I should really have taken a step back and viewed the battle objectively. I should have weighed up the options and gone for the sensible approach. However, I blew it quite spectacularly. If I'd played my cards right I could have scraped a draw, but seeing things slipping badly as they were I panicked and made some tactically regrettable decisions.

Not taking the time I needed to reckon the current victory point situation, I assumed that I had a lot of catching up to do. The way I rationalised this was to attempt to prevent the Space Wolves achieving their mission by getting closer to the cargo than they with my Genestealers, trapping as many Space Marines as possible with the Lictor, and shredding the Iron Priest for a much needed

In the aftermath it becomes clear that the Space Wolves have seized their objective. But the cost is high and three of Ragnar's finest warriors lie dying in the gorge.

"I am not pleased with myself, to put it bluntly."

extra point. The Tyranid out on the flank, and the Carnifex, would just have to do what they could. Everything then moved appropriately, the Lictor breaking from combat with impunity to interpose itself between the Space Wolves and the table edge. The Genestealer closest to the Space Marines pitched into the hapless Iron Priest and gleefully tore him limb from limb, as the remainder of its brood moved as far over the rocks, towards the cargo, as they could.

Shooting proved to be a washout as the devourer failed to find its mark, and the Carnifex, not surprisingly, could not muster enough impact from its bio-plasma to penetrate the Eradicator's heavy armour. And so it was done.

THE PAINFUL ABSENCE OF A FINAL SOLUTION

Mark: I am not pleased with myself, to put it bluntly. I know exactly what I did wrong and there was really no need for it. My error was unforgivable, and should be a cautionary tale to you all. I didn't have my facts straight before I acted. The whole difference between losing or not hinged on that fateful fourth turn, and here's what I did wrong. I moved the Lictor, attempting to trap enemy troops instead of attacking the Wolf Guard Terminator next to the cargo. For one thing, I had not realised that trapping Ragnar would garner me no victory points, and had I read my mission more carefully, I would have known this. My second, and possibly worse, mistake was not being in full possession of the facts concerning Ian's mission. I erroneously (perhaps it was wishful thinking) believed that his troops had to be closer to the objective than mine at the end, in order that he might win it. It is of course the other way around, and the measuring up concluded that both the Wolf Guard and the closest Genestealer were exactly the same distance from the cargo. The Space Marines got their points and I didn't. Bah! The key was who I should have assaulted with what though. Had the Lictor charged and killed the Wolf Guard Terminator, a feat in which the odds were favourable, and the stray Genestealer killed the final Wolf Guard, instead of the Iron Priest, the Space Wolves would have lost the five victory points from the mission objective, and the result would have been a draw.

The final turn was not my only mistake I might add, just my most heinous. I could, for example, have made better use of my deployment. The Carnifex managed to do nothing all game because it was too far out on the flanks at the beginning. But the set up was unkind, particularly the unfortunately low number of broods managing to deploy on the flanks. In the final analysis it was definitely rough going, and I had more than my fair share of bad dice, but I only have myself to

blame for losing when a bit of foresight could have got me a draw from a bad situation.

As an aside, I felt so aggrieved by my own incompetence that I was itching for a rematch, which Ian was persuaded to grant me. Just to show that I am a worthy opponent when I make sure I know what I'm doing, I managed a draw. At least this makes me feel a bit more confident about future battle reports, I am happy to inform you (although it should be added that Ian continued to nullify all my psychic attacks, despite still have no psyker in his force…).

BACK TO THE FANG

Ian: Well, that was a thoroughly enjoyable game and Mark proved himself to be a more than worthy opponent. It wasn't until we worked out the victory points for each turn and sat down and had a chat about the game that we both realised how close a game it had been.

I have to admit that at the beginning I was a bit wary about fighting against the Tyranids. This is the trouble with working for Games Workshop, you have to learn all the games with all the armies. However, what generally happens is the armies and games that you have played recently are to the fore of your memory, while the details of the ones that you haven't used for some time are a little hazy (to say the least!). Anyway, needless to say I was far too busy to bother having swotting sessions with the Codex Tyranids and decided to just run with it, and hope my sub-conscious would prevent the Tyranids from pulling any nasty surprises. In the end the only irritating points were finding out that anything as big or bigger than a Tyranid Warrior counts as a *monstrous creature* and can break from hand-to-hand combat, without risk or penalty. Plus finding out how outrageously difficult it is to spot and attack Lictors. Having had Mark tell his woeful tale of his catalogue of errors, I realised that I too had actually made a mistake in the very first turn of the game *(unbelievable – Ed)*. With an army with absolutely no blast markers weapons, save a couple of bags of frag grenades, I should have realised that Ragnar Blackmane was the only man in the army that could effectively eliminate the Lictor. My failure to take action from the very start of the game meant that the Lictor was able to get to the Annihilator before Ragnar could get in a position to stop him.

Which brings me nicely onto my second error *(now you're just getting sloppy – Ed)*, the Annihilator. What the blazes was I doing placing it there in the first place? Stupid, stupid, stupid! I was partly thinking that the Eradicator was enough to deal with Mark's tiny flank force, which it wasn't! This, coupled with an obsession with that Zoanthrope, which the Annihilator didn't destroy anyway, meant that the Annihilator was a tragic waste of 210 points, and cost me 3VPs. So to sum up, there was really just one error *(hah, that's more like it – Ed)*, since preventing either one of these errors would have eliminated the other. At the end of the day I should have placed the Annihilator with the Eradicator, steamed down the flank, totalling the flank force, thus preventing the destruction of the Grey Hunter bolter pack and leaving me with one extra tank round the back of the Tyranids to give that nasty old Carnifex a good seeing to. So all in all, if I hadn't make my mistakes, and Mark hadn't made his mistakes I would still have won, 10 VPs to 6VPs. However, we do tend to make mistakes in the heat of battle, and with two well chosen armies and equally matched opponents, victory will go to the man who makes the least.

"That was truly heroic. It really was the stuff of which Sagas are written."

But what about the Wolf Guard? That was truly heroic. It really was the stuff of which Sagas are written. I often hear people say that Space Marines aren't as hard in the game as they are in the stories. Well folks, here's the proof, Space Marines are rock. Six Space Wolves against two broods of some of the most lethal hand-to-hand troops in the galaxy. I can hear the voices of Rune Priests echoing throughout the halls of Fenris, centuries from now, retelling this battle from the Sagas over and over!

I was rather pleased with my bold decision to use Ragnar's *Wolf Battle Howl* and in the end it won me the game, which I think I would otherwise have lost quite badly. Mark was rather shocked by this sudden assault, informing me over a mid-game cuppa that I was handing him the game on a plate. However, I knew different.

FINAL VPs
TYRANIDS: 10
SPACE WOLVES: 15

SEIZING THE INITIATIVE AND CHOOSING YOUR OPPONENTS

For those that want the actual tactical run down of how this was achieved, I'll just give a brief summary. First off, I seized the initiative by charging the enemy. This way I got to choose who I wanted to attack and the enemy's extra numbers would count for nought in the first round. Secondly, I attacked the Hormagaunts in a narrow pass. Attacking on a narrow front impaired Mark's ability to bring his Genestealers into the combat. Thirdly, having dispatched the Hormagaunts by the end of second round, the only combatants left were the Genestealers. Rather than following up into hand-to-hand with these vile creatures (that would be suicide), the remaining Wolf Guard followed up into the cover of the nearby rocks. From here they were able to use their *Rapid Fire* skill to mow down the Genestealers with a fusillade of bolter fire. They were assisted by their Grey Hunter brethren who had swiftly dispatched the Termagants and swung around to "trap" the Tyranids! And I still had a Wolf Guard within 3" of my objective to boot – Mission complete, funny how things turn out, ain't it.

By Jake Thornton

This month, Jake explains a scenario idea and Adrian and Ian get to see if it works!

WARHAMMER 40,000

A CLASH OF PATROLS

INSPIRATION

What with Vypers and Attack Bikes both being released this month, we were all thinking about what new tricks we could pull with Eldar and Space Marine armies. More fast attacks and lightning strikes were predicted, and the general speed of Warhammer 40,000 battles would increase, we thought. It all reminded me of some historical games I'd played years ago, with lightly armed scouting forces clashing ahead of the main bodies of the armies. That gave me an idea for a simple scenario...

THE BASIC PLOT

From orbital auguries and the mutterings of their psykers, the Space Marines have learned that a large force of Eldar is closing in. They are unsure exactly where the aliens will strike, but know that they will be fast and deadly, so they have reinforced the outposts which protect their frontiers. One of these is an isolated Firebase which is used as a centre of operations for local Space Marine patrols.

The Eldar are out scouting, probing for weaknesses in the Imperial position, following the lines of fate divined by their Farseers. Their Scouts move ahead of the rest of the army, and, waiting until the Firebase is almost deserted by outgoing patrols, they contact the rest of the nearby Eldar forces. Their psykers are far to the rear, so a decision is made by a respected Exarch – attack now.

THE BATTLEFIELD

The table should be set up with a Firebase in the centre, but as far as everything else is concerned it's up to you. All that you should bear in mind is that it's supposed to be a fast-moving battle, so the density of the terrain should balance the need of the infantry for some cover with the need of the vehicles for some space to zoom about in.

Having a lot of space also helps give the feel that I was after: a large area with small forces chasing each other through it. It should have a very low density of troops compared to normal games. This will make the battlefield feel empty, and give everyone a lot more room to manoeuvre. Use the biggest table you can, ours was 12'x6'!

INITIAL FORCES

The Space Marines start with a Tactical squad guarding a Firebase in the centre of the table. They are led by a Veteran Sergeant with up to 20 points of wargear (including his single wargear card if he takes it). The Space Marines set up first.

They will be reinforced on their second, third and fourth turns by returning patrols consisting of a Space Marine Bike squad (4 Bikes, plus an Attack Bike), a Land Speeder and an Assault squad wearing jump packs, as these are the fastest things available. Roll at the start of the Space Marines' second, third and fourth turns to see which one arrives that turn.

Where each patrol appears is also random. Roll a D6: the patrol arrives on the Space Marines' left (1-2), behind them (3-4) or on their right (5-6), see the map on the opposite page. Dice for each patrol separately as it arrives. It may move on in the movement phase from anywhere on this edge further than 12" from any enemy model, travelling at any speed. The vehicles may carry a total of 25 points of vehicle cards between them.

WAVES OF ELDAR

The Eldar are a hastily assembled raiding party, pulled together from scouting forces probing ahead of the main warhost. Their battle leader is a Swooping Hawk Exarch rather than the usual psyker, as he is the most experienced warrior at hand. Their army arrives in two waves, the first of which must contain all the Scouts, who are set up on the board as usual. The rest of this initial wave moves onto the board in their first turn, travelling at any speed. The second wave arrives on Eldar turn 2 in the same way.

To keep the character of the battle, the Eldar army may *only* be chosen from the following list, with 400 points to spend on each wave.

1 Swooping Hawk Exarch.

1+ Scout squads.

0-2 Swooping Hawk squads.

0-1 Warp Spider squads.

Any number of Vyper Jetbikes.

Any number of Jetbike squads.

Restrictions on numbers are for the army in total. Wargear and options may be chosen for these troop types as normal from the Codex Eldar book.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The game lasts for 6 turns. The Eldar win if there are no Space Marines within 12" of the Firebase at the end of the game. Any other result is a Space Marine victory.

Thanks to Andy Chambers for his comments on the scenario, and to Richard Potter (of the 'Eavy Metal team) for the loan of the beautifully painted Ulthwé Vyper and Jetbikes you see here.

On a tactical note, the forces in this scenario are deliberately unequal in points. This is to balance the random deployment of the Space Marines as well as the bittyness of their arrival. Forces are weaker if scattered, but the Space Marines' (deliberately) poor position is compensated for by their superiority in points. Exact balance is impossible, but what the heck, it's just supposed to be a bit of fun! Finally, with small forces, and the high number of heavy weapons you get in vehicle based forces, I expect this will be very bloody. That said, let battle commence…

1-2

Roll a D6 to see where the Space Marine reinforcements arrive.

3-4

Put the Firebase in the middle and add other scenery as you see fit.

5-6

Eldar move on here

ULTRAMARINES FORCE

Ian: So, how was I going to defend this Firebase against a fast moving force of the ultra deadly Eldar? Well, some characters of low moral fibre, who I am ashamed to say actually reside here in the bunker, have suggested I could just hide some guys in the Firebase and they would be nigh-on impossible to shift with anything short of a full orbital virus bombing. Yes, well I'm pretty sure that would work, as would numerous other devious and underhand tricks. However, I would get very bored playing like that, and you'd probably not be too impressed either. Space Marines cowering behind parapets? Hiding from mere Eldar? That'd never do. No, the key is to play to the spirit of the scenario. Just because your mate (Jake in this case) hasn't been too careful with his wording, doesn't mean you should use this as opportunity to come up with some sneaky lawyeristic way of winning.

That said, I started the battle by doing some creative interpretation myself. This is what often happens with scenarios. They look fine on paper, but when you try them out on the tabletop you quickly realise the need for a bit of tweaking here and there to make them work as intended.

In the end, it turned out that Jake was out of the building at the time, watching the last issue of White Dwarf being printed, so Adrian and I were left to our own devices.

When Jake had explained the scenario to me, I got the impression that he wanted the whole Tactical squad to be deployed in the Firebase itself. There were two problems with this. First off, the Firebase does not provide that much cover. Secondly, it seemed to make much more sense for the Tactical squad to be split up, the two parts providing some sort of covering fire for each other. I particularly liked the look of those rocks to the right of the Firebase. Thirdly *(I thought you said two reasons? – Ed)*, I love deploying my troops to make it as difficult as possible for enemy scouts to deploy in any useful positions. Deploying half the Tactical squad in the rocks would also hinder the deployment of Adrian's scout forces.

So, I read Jake's actual copy of the scenario and it said the Tactical squad had to start the game "guarding" the Firebase. Herein lay a way for me to deploy my forces to my advantage *(now who's getting lawyeristic – Ed)*. I mean it's not too difficult to imagine the Veteran Sergeant ordering half the Tactical squad to offer covering fire from those rocks over there. These are Space Marines after all, and they're not likely to miss a simple tactical trick like that, are they?

REINFORCEMENTS

In addition to a Tactical squad, I would also have at my disposal three patrols that would turn up at the beginning of turns two, three and four. The patrols consisted of an Assault squad with jump packs, a Bike squadron, and a single Land Speeder. I would have to rely on the luck of the draw to see which order they arrived in as well as which direction they came from, but at least I knew help was on its way!

With a bit of luck, my Space Marine Assault squad would arrive in the second or third turn. If it was the last of the patrols to come back, then it might be too late!

The vehicles were less of a problem from the speed point of view, as they would all be able to move rapidly to aid the surviving defenders. However, the lone Land Speeder would have to be careful as it is a single, large, tempting target, and I'd have to make sure that I didn't leave it exposed to much enemy fire. Adrian would almost certainly fire everything he could at it as soon as he had the chance.

ELDAR HOST

Adrian: The restrictions on my army list forced me to make some interesting choices. Do I take lots of ground troops, or have more vehicles? Do I really tool up the Exarch with lots of warrior powers and wargear, or do I put more into the vehicles, taking lots of vehicle cards? In the end I decided to keep things basic, no endless upgrades to forget. The infantry would comprise a squad of Scouts, and a squad of Swooping Hawks to accompany the Exarch, who I gave only the most basic equipment, a *Lasblaster* and Swooping Hawk wings. The vehicles would be great fun, so I took two squads of Jetbikes and two Vypers with shuriken "shrieker" cannons. The only vehicle upgrade I could afford was for the Ulthwé Vyper, a *Crystal Targeting Matrix,* so the gunner and driver could shoot fast moving vehicles without penalty. This appeared to be a balanced force: loads of vehicles, some foot troops and some really great Aspect Warriors to round it all off.

ULTRAMARINES

Space Marine Land Speeder: with additional *Super-charged Engine.*

Space Marine Bike Squadron: consisting of four Space Marine Bikes and an Attack Bike.

The Attack Bike is armed with a heavy bolter, and is equipped with an *Ammo Feed,* an auto-launcher loaded with frag grenades, a *Searchlight* and a *Super-charged Engine.*

The bikers are equipped as follows: one plasma gun, one melta-gun and one power sword.

Space Marine Tactical squad: Led by a Veteran Sergeant equipped with *Armour Piercing Ammo.*

The squad consists of ten Space Marines armed with bolt pistols, bolt guns and frag grenades. One is armed with a melta-gun and another with a heavy bolter.

The squad is split into two combat squads of five Space Marines each.

Space Marine Assault squad: The Assault squad consists of ten Space Marines equipped with bolt pistols, frag and krak grenades, jump packs and a variety of deadly assault weapons.

The squad is split into two combat squads of five Space Marines each.

SAIM-HANN FORCES

Swooping Hawk Exarch: The Exarch is the army commander and is armed with a *Lasblaster.*

Eldar Vyper Jetbike: armed with twin linked shuriken catapults and pintle-mounted shuriken cannon.

Jetbike Squad: Consisting of five Jetbikes from the Wildriders of the Saim-Hann Craftworld.

Swooping Hawk squad: consisting of five Swooping Hawks.

Eldar Scouts: consisting of five Eldar Scouts armed with needle sniper rifles.

ULTHWÉ FORCES

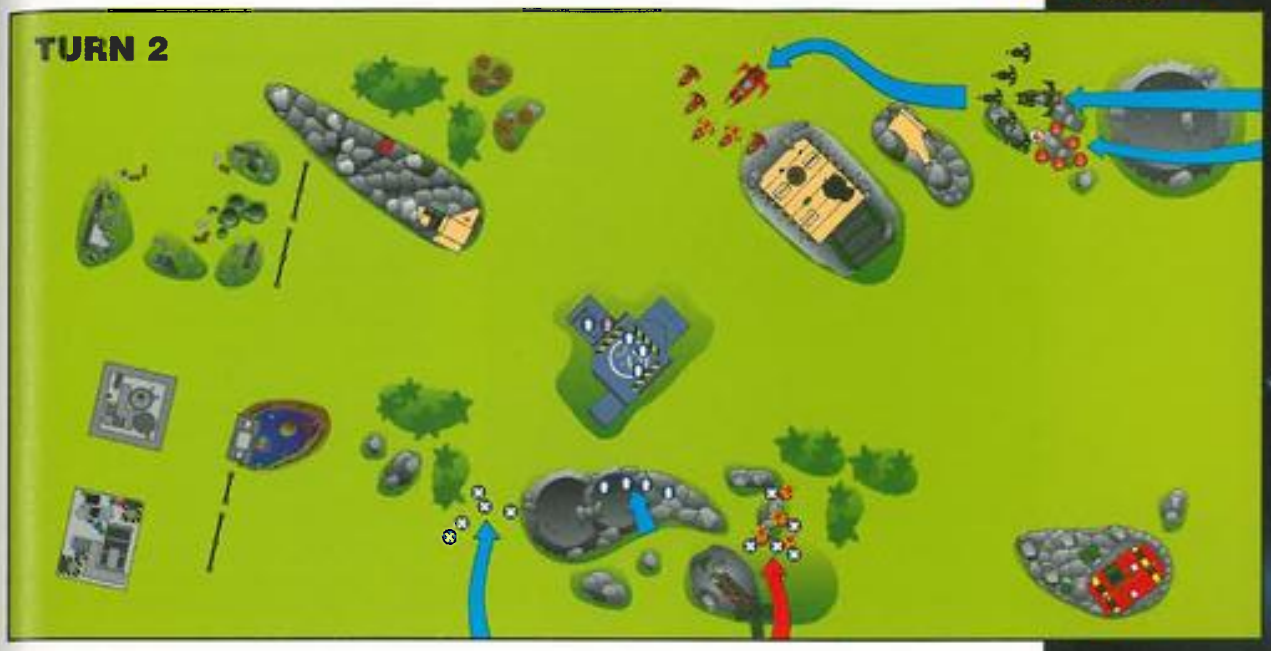
Eldar Vyper Jetbike: armed with twin linked shuriken catapults and pintle-mounted shuriken cannon. The Vyper is equipped with a *Crystal Targeting Matrix.*

Jetbike Squad: Consisting of five Jetbikes from the Ulthwé Craftworld. One Jetbike has been upgraded with a shuriken cannon.

While the Space Marines wait for the inevitable attack, the Eldar Scouts pick their targets.

ELDAR TURN 1

Adrian: With the Scouts deployed in hiding at the beginning of the game, my first act of the battle was to bring the Saim-Hann Jetbike squadron onto the board during the first turn, along with the Swooping Hawk Exarch. In order to see any action, the Jetbikes would have to get going at a rate of knots, so I brought them on at fast speed! They formed an elegant spearhead formation with the Vyper bringing up the rear – what an inspiring sight. Even though the Jetbikes had come onto the table as fast as they could, the Swooping Hawk Exarch landed level with the screeching Eldar vehicles, poised for battle. He really was rather fitting as the acting army commander for this mission. Over on the left, the Scouts began to advance on the Space Marine Tactical squad, moving into cover and hiding. But with the Space Marines skulking in the rocks and around the Firebase, the Eldar Scouts had no targets.



SPACE MARINE TURN 1

Ian: I had something of a false start to my first turn. I moved my first patrol, the Assault squad, who turned up and cut the Eldar Scouts to ribbons. I then realised that they shouldn't have arrived until turn two, and placed Adrian's Scouts back on the table and got on with the turn proper. Oops, sorry!

The Space Marine Tactical squad in the rocks was under threat from the Scout's needle rifles. In anticipation they went on overwatch. The other combat squad on top of the Firebase crouched low behind the walls and blast shields which had been raised to provide vital cover. A signal went out over the comm-net, the first wave of Jetbikes had been spotted, truly the game was afoot. The Jetbikes are not *that* fast, so the Space Marines would be safe from attack for another turn yet. By that time the first of the patrols would have arrived to strengthen the Imperial defenses.

ELDAR TURN 2

Adrian: Now the full force of the Eldar attack began to mass, and what an inspiring sight it was. The first wave of Jetbikes swung round into the open in front of the Firebase, begging the human scum to open fire! The Space Marine with the heavy bolter would have to be pretty lucky to hit any of the Eldar vehicles moving at fast speed. The second wave of Jetbikes, this time from Ulthwé, took up the same formation and position as the first. Instead of striking out on his own, I decided that it would be more prudent for the Swooping Hawk Exarch to wait for the rest of the Swooping Hawks to arrive. They would be able to move out together next turn.

Ian: Despite the fact that the combat squad on the Firebase was on overwatch, the wily Veteran Sergeant ordered his men to remain hidden. There was little point giving the Eldar exrta opportunities to fire their deadly shuriken weapons.

Grinning maniacally, Adrian brings on his second wave of Jetbikes!

With characteristic ease, the Space Marine Assault troops make short work of the Eldar Scouts.

Adrian: The Eldar Scouts emerged from their hiding places, and spotted the Space Marines hidden amongst the rocks. Before the Scouts could begin sniping at the hapless Space Marines, the squad blasted away on overwatch, but even at such close range the Space Marines' bolt pistols fared rather poorly. The cameleoline cloaks work by breaking up the outline of the wearer, giving a -1 to hit modifier. That, coupled with some hard cover, saved the Scouts from serious harm, and only one of the Eldar fell under the Imperial fire. In reply, the Scouts were equally unlucky. Although each hit automatically wounded its target, due to the toxin from the Scout's needle rifles, only a single Space Marine was slain.

SPACE MARINE TURN 2

Ian: The first of the patrols arrived this turn. It turned out to be my Assault squad,which I split into two combat squads. I then rolled to see which table edge they would arrive on, and got my right flank. One squad began to advance on the Firebase, whilst the second pounced on the Eldar Scouts.

Now was the time to kill some Eldar Jetbikers. The Tactical troops on the Firebase rose from their position, bolters blazing in the staccato rhythm of a Space Marine rapid fire fusillade. But even with such a mass of bolter fire, the shells pattered off the armoured hulls of the Jetbikes like rain. Then the Space Marine with a heavy bolter took careful aim, and his targeter paid for itself in one fell swoop. The sustained fire killed the pilots of three Jetbikes! Onwards for the Emperor!

The Tactical squad in the rocks, confident that their assault trained brethren could deal with the Scouts by themselves, returned to offering covering fire for the troops in the Firebase. Meanwhile, the Assault squad hacked their way through the Scouts with accustomed ease.

ELDAR TURN 3

Adrian: The first and most obvious thing to do was clear the Firebase of enemy troops. Then the Swooping Hawks, who were advancing in the cover of the wrecked spacecraft, could fly over to the building in safety next turn. Even though I had lost three Jetbikes to the oh-so-lucky heavy bolter last turn, I was determined to crush all opposition at the Firebase, occupy it and then sweep the Space Marines from the area by the end of the battle. I'd wasted two turns massing my forces and the time had come to strike! Both the remaining Saim-Hann Jetbikes and Vyper, followed by the Ulthwé vehicles swung round en masse and rained down fire onto the Firebase. The hard cover proved to be a problem, but with so many vehicles the massed weaponry would surely prevail. One after another the Jetbikes began to wheedle out the Space Marines from cover and the tide began to turn in my favour. Soon all the Space Marines at the Firebase lay dead and the way was now clear for next turn's assault.

SPACE MARINE TURN 3

Ian: Having just lost a combat squad of Tactical Space Marines and possession of the Firebase, things were looking a bit grim. I needed to keep

my precious Assault squads safe so they could retake the Firebase later. Unfortunately, Adrian also had the capability to take them out in a single blow. I needed to distract the Eldar and to do that I would have to distract Adrian. Fortunately, my Bike Squadron arrived on the right flank and I threw them straight into the path of the oncoming Jetbikes. The Space Marine Bikes tried to blast the Saim-Hann Jetbikes as they hovered in the open with twin-linked bolter fire, but lacked the range to hit. However, the gunner on the Attack Bike had more than sufficient range and fired off a burst of heavy bolter fire at the Eldar vehicles. The shot hit home and wrecked the last of the squadron. Hopefully, the Eldar would respond and engage my Bikes.

As the Space Marine Bike Squadron returns from its patrol, the Eldar pounce!

ELDAR TURN 4

Adrian: The Swooping Hawks swept down onto the Firebase, being careful not to land too close to cover and crash. The threat from the Space Marine Bike squadron could not be ignored and the Jetbikes once again swept round en masse, bringing their weapons to bear on the Imperial vehicle. Then the shooting began. It's worth bearing in mind that the Jetbike riders are only Guardians, so actually hitting the target was always going to be a problem, even before adding all the modifiers for fast target, etc. However, just as with my beloved Ork Warbikes, I knew that when they did hit the twin linked shuriken catapults and shuriken "shrieker" cannon would make mincemeat of the opposition. Yes, the fast speed of the Space Marine Bikes proved to be a headache, but massed firepower won out in the end. One Jetbike, firing its "shrieker", totalled three bikes in one go with a massive double 3 on the sustained fire dice. Wow! The *Crystal Targeting Matrix* on the Ulthwé Vyper meant that it ignored all modifiers for fast moving vehicles and destroyed its target in a hail of shuriken. Only one Space Marine Bike was left, and unfortunately it was the one with the melta-gun. It was at this point that I suddenly remembered how secretive Ian had been about what vehicle cards he'd been going to put on his Space Marine Bikes and Land Speeder at the start of the battle. Well Ian, I thought, we'll never know what they were now, will we!

SPACE MARINE TURN 4

Ian: Ho ho! Adrian, who we all know has Ork blood flowing in his veins, simply could not resist the target my Bike squadron offered him. He had swallowed the bait up to the hook. Yeah, sure, the Bikes had been totalled. It had been a major sacrifice, but I felt that it really helped my position, and though it hurt it was worthwhile. Adrian had slowed down with his Jetbikes and now they were within reach of my Assault troops.

Now began the most decisive attack to cripple the Eldar's aerial forces and retake the Firebase. The Space Marine Assault troops on the right leapt onto the Firebase, showering the Saim-Hann Vyper with krak grenades. Most of them missed, not even scattering onto any surrounding targets, but one hit home, cracking open the armour and damaging the vehicle's controls. Would it go out of control next turn or would the driver keep it aloft? There is always a possibility it can crash, on

The Space Marine assault troops pelt the Saim Hann Vyper with krak grenades.

a 1 or a 6, if out of control. The Space Marine biker with the melta-gun had driven into the midst of the Ulthwé Jetbikes and blasted the second Vyper's shuriken catapults. I had now greatly reduced its fire capability.

Meanwhile, unseen by the forces locked in deadly combat around the Firebase, the last of the patrols had returned. The Space Marine Land Speeder. Unfortunately I rolled a 4 and the machine came onto the table on the farthest table edge. Drat! But all was not lost, I had expected such an eventuality and so had spent most of my precious points allowance for vehicle upgrades on *Super Charged Engines*. With this, it roared across the battlefield, ending up in a position where one more burst of fast speed would bring it into action next turn.

ELDAR TURN 5

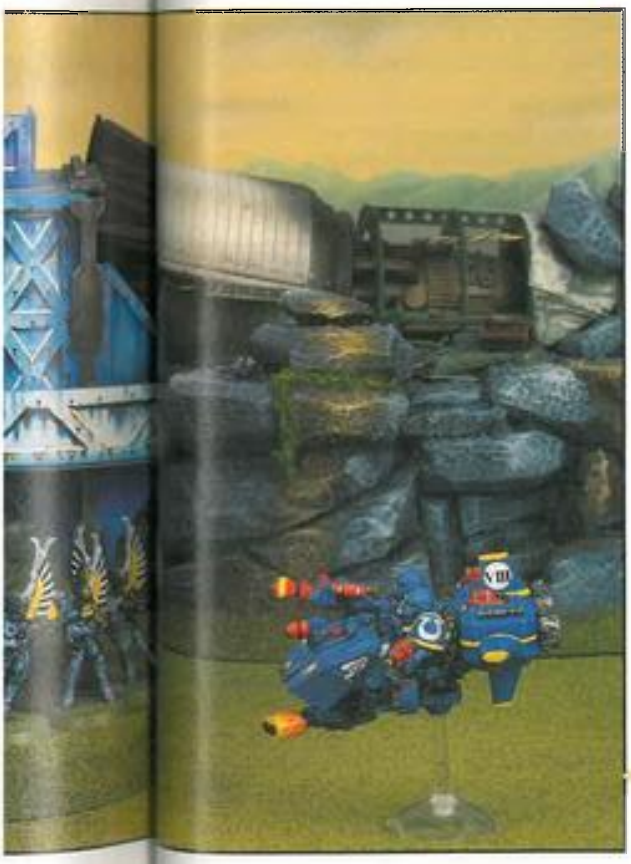
Adrian: Now I needed to clear the Firebase of intruders and smash any attempts to assault my position a second time. The Saim-Hann pilot managed to wrestle with the controls and brought the vehicle around to blast the second squad of Assault troops in the open. At the sight of the Eldar vehicle the Space Marines on overwatch opened fire and killed the Vyper's gunner. That wouldn't help my cause, I needed as much firepower as I could muster! The second Vyper swept over the Firebase in order to combine its firepower with the first against the Space Marine Assault squad.

The Space Marine Land Speeder prepares to engulf the Swooping Hawks in a gout of flame!

I had a strong sense of déjà vu as the Ulthwé Jetbikes formed a firing squad in order to kill the Assault troops. How often had I done exactly the same thing with my own Warbikes in my games at home? Hopefully I would have the same success with twin-linked shuriken catapults as I usually did with twin-linked autocannon. The Exarch also stood ready to supply his own weight of fire to getting rid of these Space Marines. The Swooping Hawks surrounded the last biker and raised their krak grenades.

In unison, the Swooping Hawks launched their grenades at the unfortunate Assault trooper. His armour was shattered by the blast and he was killed instantly. The Swooping Hawk Exarch fired in turn, hitting with all his three *Lasblaster* shots. Unfortunately the *Lasblaster* has a much greater save modifier in hand-to-hand than in shooting, so although all the hits wounded only one Space Marine failed his armour save.

I was disappointed by the Jetbike's performance as they only killed a single Space Marine. The shuriken catapults' strength 4 and -2 save just doesn't compare to an autocannon's strength 8 and -3, which is what I'm used to. My two Vypers had better luck, killing three of the Space Marine Assault troops moving across the open ground with their combined firepower. Playing Space Marines at their own game like this and trying to match them firepower for firepower is a desperate measure, but it was all I had!



SPACE MARINE TURN 5

Ian: Now began the battle for the Firebase in earnest, and what a battle it promised to be. One final blast of the *Super-charged Engine* and the Land Speeder was in action. The three Assault troops attacked the Swooping Hawk Exarch in hand-to-hand combat, the remaining Space Marines from the second squad bounding over to stare the Vypers in the face.

The Land Speeder unleashed its terrible cargo. The heavy flamer torched four of the Swooping Hawk squad, and the multi-melta spat superheated death at the Ulthwé Vyper. The Vyper crew were caught in the multi-melta's blast and incinerated, but the actual hit on the machine itself only damaged its controls. No pyrotechnics today. At the foot of the Firebase the Assault troops blasted the Saim-Hann Vyper pilot and now the second Vyper was out of control.

The close combat began. The first Space Marine torched the Swooping Hawk Exarch with his hand flamer and the second blasted him with his plasma pistol. Under such a hail of fire the Exarch was slain, the fine veins of his Swooping Hawk wings crumpling and burning in the inferno. Despite the death of the army commander, the surviving Swooping Hawk was resolute and passed his break test. Then the Space Marine Assault troops jumped on him. It looked like it was all over for the Eldar.

The Space Marines try to eradicate the last few Eldar Jetbikes, but to no avail.

ELDAR TURN 6

Adrian: Out of control, both my Vypers crashed and burned, sadly without landing on any Space Marines. The only way I was going to have any chance of winning now was to spread out my remaining Jetbikes as much as possible and hope I got very lucky with my shooting. But as they moved into position for one final attempt at clearing the Firebase of Space Marines, my hopes were dashed. One of them was killed by overwatch fire, it really was all over. Even so, I wasn't going to throw in the towel just yet.

In the firefight that followed, the Assault troops remained untouched, but the driver of the Land Speeder was killed. This meant the skimmer would go out of control next turn, though I doubted that this would make any real difference to the proceedings.

The Space Marines easily killed the Swooping Hawk in hand-to-hand combat, and that was the end of the Aspect Warriors.

SPACE MARINE TURN 6

Ian: There was little left to do. Adrian was pleased to see my Land Speeder crash, and I shot down one of his Jetbikes, but that was all. It was all over, and despite the Eldar, I remained in control of the Firebase. Just.

HEY, BLAST 'EM!

Adrian: Of course this scenario is right up my street, it's a small battle (see my comments on Small Battles in last issue)! Not only that, but it's got fast moving, light vehicles in it as well. One of the similarities between the Eldar and the Orks are their potent light vehicles. Admittedly, Orks are an ever inventive race with a multitude of vehicles to choose from, but you get the idea. The new Vypers were a joy to play with, they look so awesome and deadly flying over the battlefield. Jetbikes are always fun to use, it's like First World War dogfighting at low level.

You certainly have to be decisive when you play this kind of scenario. One bad decision and you're all dead! I kind of like that though. I haven't analysed the battle too much, from either side really. You can always say "what if", but sometimes a life or death, no turning back now situation is uniquely exciting without getting too caught up in tactics. Reacting to events as they happen can be fun, and the way you respond to a given situation can say more about you as a player than anything else.

It would be fun to swap sides though, or try different forces. If I was going to put any new slants on this I would try having less Space Marines, perhaps more foot troops. Perhaps a Rhino for the Space Marines would make the troops more mobile, maybe 6 turns is too short a turn limit – you could just have a duel to the death! In some ways the Firebase is so big you have to control a huge area in order to win, you could make the area of control much smaller. But hey, life is never an evenly matched battle. Above all, I'd like to try this with da Boyz, the firefight would be deadly. I can feel the Waaagh in my veins already!

POSITION SECURE!

Ian: So another crushing victory for Space Marine Commander Ian. Hmm, but was it? Yeah sure, strictly speaking I was the victor. However, it didn't feel like it to start with.

Toward the end of the battle though, it was becoming clear that short of a small miracle Adrian was not going to kill all my Space Marines. But from the moment the Jetbikes strafed the Firebase, taking out the Tactical squad, I felt I was going to end up with something of a hollow victory. A Tactical Space Marine or two, skulking around some rocks near the Firebase while a Swooping Hawk squad and Exarch swarmed all over my HQ hardly seemed worthy of any honour, yet technically it would win me the game. Next time we might play with slightly different victory conditions.

However, in the end, despite some lousy dice rolling, I felt that my troops had the situation under control. I had a whole combat squad of Space Marine Assault troops on the Firebase, and a Tactical combat squad minus one brother offering covering fire from the rocks. All that was left of the Eldar forces was four Jetbikes in various states of disrepair. However you define controlling the Firebase, I think I won. Jake and Adrian may have other things to say on this score, but sitting down, with a cup of tea and some biccies (still no Bourbons though), discussing the ins and outs of a game is all part of the fun.

JAKE'S BIT

Jake: Well I think that went rather well. By the time I'd got back from the printers Adrian and Ian were well into the battle, and they'd managed to translate most of my instructions into English. They also seemed to be having a whale of a time, zipping about with Jetbikes and charging the enemy with Bike squadrons, so I left them to it.

Ian keeps saying he wants to swap sides and fight it again, so it must have been fun. I want to try it with six players, one commanding each Space Marine patrol, one for the Tactical squad in the Firebase, and one each for the Eldar waves of attack. That sounds like a good laugh.

The scenario would also translate well to other armies. Try putting Imperial Guard in the Firebase and having Rough Riders (or Space Marines) come to their aid. Attack with the Orks, or Chaos Space Marines on bikes, or Tyranids. There are lots of possibilities, so why not give it a try? Just don't take it too seriously!

WARHAMMER 40,000

Massacre at Sanctuary 101

In this month's Warhammer 40,000 battle report, White Dwarf's very own Ian Strickland and Markus Trenkner battle it out. The Sisters of Battle fight a desperate rearguard action to hold back the unstoppable tide of the Necron Raiders. This special scenario is by Rick Priestley.

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Sister at Watch report 210897. M41. The Hour of Durelias. It is my duty to report that at exactly 3 Zero 5 of the Hour of Durelias, the Light of the Astronomican was extinguished in Sanctuary 101. 4 hours of prayer followed upon the alarm but there was only darkness. The Choir stood down at 8 Double-Zero. End Report.

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On the outskirts of the galaxy lies the tiny outpost of Sanctuary 101. Though the planet is barren and lifeless it is not uninhabited. Many centuries ago the Sisterhood of the Emperor Deified built a small community here. Today Sanctuary 101 is home to those of the Order of our Martyred Lady who seek to redeem the sins of mankind by means of rigorous prayer, self-denial, and ritual mortification of the flesh. The harsh mistress of Sanctuary 101 is Sister Purity. A strict disciplinarian and demanding leader, she is also the most devout and holy of living Sisters. She is adored and respected by the Sisterhood, and Sanctuary 101 is regarded as a place of great holiness.

THE SCENARIO

Massacre at Sanctuary 101 is a scenario between a small force of Sisters of Battle and a substantial number of Necron Raiders. The objective of the Necron Raiders is to destroy the defenders before their Astropath has time to send a warning beacon to the Imperium. The objective of the Sisters of Battle is to delay the Necrons long enough to send this beacon.

SETTING THE TABLE

Sister Purity has led her small force of Battle Sisters to an old abandoned ruin. As well as ruins there are numerous rocks, gullies and places to defend. She hopes to hold the Necron Raiders here whilst the Sanctuary's Astropath attempts to relay a psychic message beacon, warning the Imperium of the Necron attack. The Astropath is not represented on the table – it is assumed that this individual is back in the Sisterhood's fortress some distance away.

THE FORCES

The Sisterhood can choose any of the Adeptus Sororitas characters, troops or support from the Sisters of Battle army list. Sanctuary 101 is a strictly female Reclusium so only female squads, characters and female controlled support weapons from the Sisters of Battle army list can be used. The player may choose 1,000 points. We decided to allow 25% support instead of the usual 15% because the force is a highly defensive one.

The Necrons can choose 2,000 points of troops from the lists in WD 217/8.

DEPLOYING THE SIDES

The Sisters of Battle deploy first anywhere within their half of the table. Any squad may set up hidden and any squad or vehicle can be set up in overwatch.

The Necrons move onto the table in their first turn. They enter along the opposite edge to the Sisterhood. Measure the Necrons' movement in the first turn from the table edge.

WHO GOES FIRST?

The Necrons have the first turn.

THE WARNING BEACON

At the start of the Sisterhood's turn 2, and at the start of each subsequent Sisterhood turn, roll a dice. If the dice scores a 6 then the Astropath has successfully prepared the psychic beacon that will warn the Imperium of the Necron attack. The beacon is automatically despatched at the end of the following Necron turn unless the Necrons can destroy all remaining Sisters of Battle before that time. This means that the Necrons always get 1 turn to finish off the Sisterhood after a 6 is rolled.

SISTERS SWORN TO DIE

The Sisterhood will automatically pass any leadership test they are required to take. They will not run from the conflict but will stand and die as necessary.

HOW LONG DOES THE GAME LAST?

The game lasts until the last Sister is slain or until the Necrons are forced to withdraw under the 25% rule (see WD217).

WHO WINS?

Normal victory conditions are ignored. Instead the Sisterhood player gains 1 point at the end of each turn that there are Sisters remaining, plus 5 points if the beacon is launched successfully. Total up the points at the end of the game.

1-5 Points	Total Necron Victory!
6-8 Points	Necron Victory
9-11 Points	Sisterhood Victory
12+ Points	Total Sisterhood Victory!

Of course, if the Necrons are forced to withdraw, the result is automatically a Total Sisterhood Victory.

SPECIAL CHARACTER

SISTER PURITY – cost 40 points.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Save
4	4	5	3	4	2	5	2	9	3+

TABLE SETUP

When setting up the battlefield for this scenario its a good idea to bear one or two things in mind. The planet is meant to be quite barren and featureless so you could for instance go for a Gorkamorka type table top with sand instead of grass. The planet is devoid of all vegetation as well so don't bother with any trees, just use as many rocks and craters as you can. The wall sections from the Warhammer 40,000 boxed game is perfect cover for this scenario, the more the better. Why not combine two sets of wall sections together from two sets of Warhammer 40,000? Alternatively you might want to use a Firebase, Bastion or the new Battle Bunker terrain models. You might want to use the Ruined Shrine from WD 212 as this will fit in well with the Sisters of Battle theme for the scenario.

Remember that only one half of the battlefield needs to be covered in terrain, the half where the Necrons come onto the board is barren and featureless. This means that even a relatively small amount of terrain suddenly becomes very important to the defending side, to make full use of that you've got!

Markus Trenkner

NECRON RAIDERS

Markus: The scenario Ian and I are going to play tells the story of a Necron Raid on a defended position. We are going to set up the terrain in a way that reflects the fact that the Sisters of Sanctuary 101 will have chosen their defensive positions carefully: my Necron Raiders will have to assault the Sisterhood over open ground. This, and the fact that the selection of troop types available to the Necrons is very limited, makes the army selection very straight forward for me.

Firstly I pick a Necron Lord as leader for my raiding force (not that they would need one, thanks to them being machines and ignoring all Leadership based tests). As there are no options for the Necron Lord, this is very straight forward and so I move swiftly on...

Next I want a lot of normal Necron Warriors for the main assault – having a lot of troops when you expect a lot of casualties is a very obvious tactic. I do expect a lot of casualties, as I will have to stage an attack without any cover whatsoever! I start with six squads of five Necron Warriors each and one squad of three, to act as a bodyguard (or in this case – machineguard) for my Necron Lord.

Taking thirty-three Necron Warriors allows me to include up to twelve Scarabs in the force (the Necron army list allows two per five Necron Warriors). Scarabs are an excellent tool to drive your opponent mad (although Ian's slightly unhinged already!), as all models suffer a -1 to hit modifier on all shooting for every Scarab within 6". Having a screen of Scarabs in front of your Necron force means a lot less incoming fire, as more shots miss. Also, their Toughness of 8 makes them very hard to kill (it is actually impossible to kill them with a bolter!), so they should have an easy time just sitting around the Battle Sisters and annoying them good and proper.

To spearhead the attack I pick ten Scarabs, which leaves me with enough points to include two Necron Destroyers in the raiding force. Necron Destroyers carry a massive Gauss-Cannon and are able to fly around the battlefield like any normal skimmer. The Destroyers should be able to deal with vehicles and tough character models the Sisterhood are liable to throw at me.

That's it: A Necron Lord, 33 Necron Warriors, 10 Scarabs and 2 Necron Destroyers. 1986 points ready to bring terror and death upon the forces of the Imperium!

Ian Strickland (A.K.A. Mutie Boy)

THE SISTERS OF BATTLE

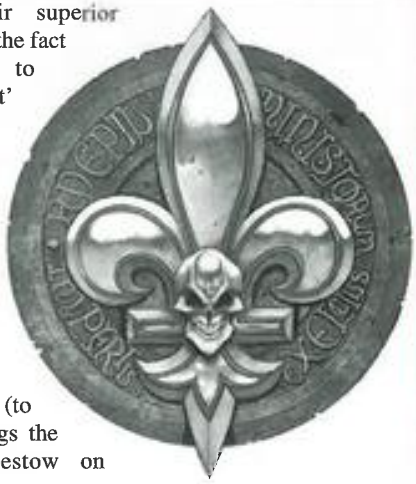
Ian: So, I have to face the full onslaught of the dreaded Necrons with only half the points, However I do have the superb Adeptus Sororitas Battle Sister and Seraphim squads. I'm not bothered that I'm deprived of any mad, religious types of the male persuasion!

Reminding myself that most great commanders have to rely on limited forces at their disposal, I peel back the pages of that ancient, forbidden tome known as Codex: Sisters of Battle, and begin to muster my forces.

First on the Characters section shopping list is Sister Purity, a souped-up Veteran Sister Superior with +1 Attacks and +1 Wounds who functions as the army commander. She should prove to be a useful warrior in close combat . As is usually my custom when choosing an army, I start with the squads so that I could get a core force and then build around it with characters and support units. Naturally my first choice is to have two Battle Sister squads, Squad Sanctoras and Squad Sistina to hold my (mainly defensive) battle line, which will be the ruined cathedral where my troops have chosen to make their final stand. I decide to arm Squad Sanctorus with a multi-melta and flamer combination. The multi-melta will provide the squad with some hard hitting firepower, and I choose the flamer because it definitely fits the feel of the army to have the Sisters cleanse the enemy in the righteous fires of retribution! I arm Squad Sistina with a heavy flamer and a melta-gun, as its short range and high Strength makes it an excellent defensive weapon.

Next I pick a Seraphim squad, Squad Angelica, who will use their jump packs to move around and harass the steel monstrosities. They can throw their krak grenades, and use their deadly skill of being able to fire both their twin bolt pistols or hand flamers at the same time, to really hammer the robots. I decide to arm both the Battle Sister squads with krak grenades, but in the end the squad armed with the multi-melta has to relinquish its supply (amidst much howling and cursing) because of a lack of points.

Next up I recruit two Veteran Sister Superiors (Karena for Squad Sanctorus and Iollata for Squad Sistina) and a Veteran Seraphim Superior, Aemillia, to lead my squads, mainly because of their superior Ballistic Skill and the fact that I am going to need all the 'to hit' rolls I can get! Taking these characters to lead my squads will also give me the added bonus of a +2 modifier to my rolls on the *Sacred Rites* table before the battle (to see which blessings the Emperor will bestow on my forces).



Last things to buy are a Rhino troop carrier, which I plan to speed around the board causing as much damage as possible (Can't kill 'em with guns? Run 'em over in tanks!), and the totally 'must have' Immolator tank with its awesome twin heavy flamers (eat hot flame death, alien scum!) which I hope will keep the enemy at bay for a couple of turns at least, whilst my squads pour firepower into them.

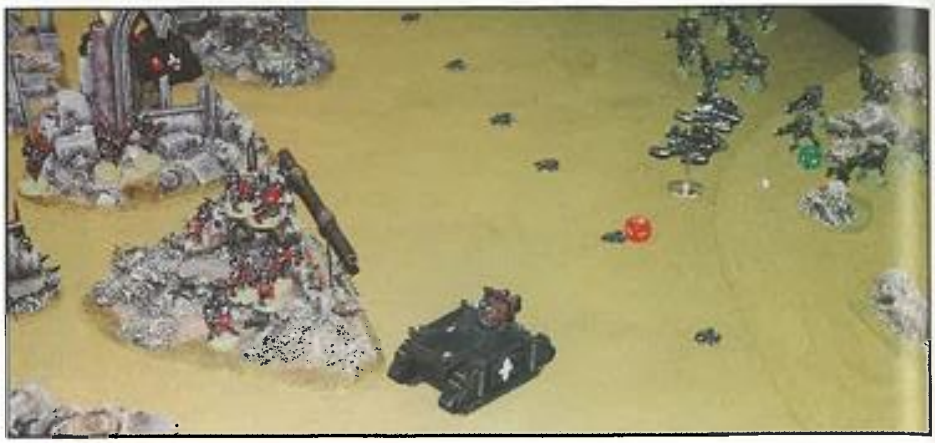
Last of all I have to roll on the *Sacred Rites* table for each of my squads. First I roll a 2 for Seraphim Squad Angelica which is modified to 4 because of my Veteran Seraphim Superior, which gives the squad +1 to its Leadership, a good result although rather spoilt by the fact that the scenario states that my entire force are immune to all break tests and psychology during the battle! Pressing on I roll for the Battle Sister Squad Sistina, which contains the heavy flamer, again using their Veteran Sister's +2 modifier and get a 7, which means that the squad automatically passes all psychology and break tests. Again, sadly useless!

Bowed, but not broken (yet!) I valiantly make my last roll, for Squad Sanctorus, containing the multi-melta, and get an 8 – which means that the squad ignores the normal *Choosing a Target* rules and can shoot at whichever squad or vehicle they choose. Cool! This result will come in really useful, much more so than the others! And with that I close the pages of the musty tome, and the forces of Sister Purity prepare to sell their lives to defeat an unknown foe…

TURN 1

NECRON RAIDERS

The Battle Sisters had taken their positions in the ruins of an industrial complex and an old cathedral. They expected the Raiders any second and held their weapons ready to fire upon anything that moved. Suddenly the wind fell silent and only a heartbeat later the rays of the orange sun of Sanctuary 101 broke upon a huge number of metallic objects stalking towards them. They seemed to appear out of nowhere.



The Immolator moves into position to purge the Necrons with the flames of purity.

"Squad Sanctorus, hold your fire, ignore the small droids, engage the metal walkers at maximum range, Squad Sistina and Squad Angelica remain in position," Sister Purity spoke the order calmly into her comm-link, "Concentrate all your fire on one target until it is destroyed." Seconds later the first Necron Warriors came into range and Squad Sanctorus opened fire. A hail of bolter shells struck home with unerring accuracy and exploded against the metallic carapaces of the Necron Warriors, but to the Sisters' disbelief none of the mechanoids went down – they simply marched on. Several of the insect-like Scarabs came flying down and landed just in front of the ruined cathedral.

Moments later a hissing roar interrupted the staccato bolter fire, as Sister Elana from Squad Sanctorus fired her multi-melta at the advancing Raiders. One of the mechanoids was engulfed in a fireball and went down, the first visible effect the Battle Sisters' weaponry was having on the Necron Warriors.

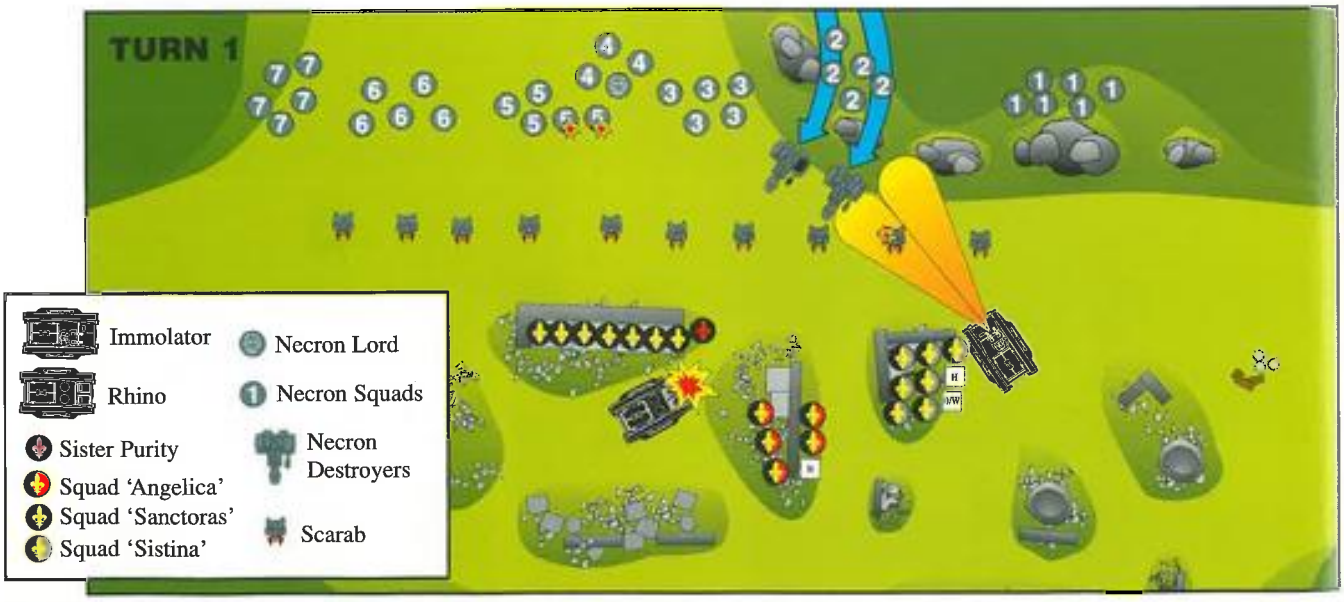
Squad Sistina and Angelica remained hidden in their positions, while the Immolator and the Rhino started their engines – their orders were to mercilessly attack the advancing Necrons and hopefully cause confusion, if something like that was at all possible amongst those mechanoid monstrosities.

The Necron Destroyers came out of nowhere. Swooping down over the battlefield, one of them immediately opened fire on the Rhino. With deadly precision the Rhino's bolters were hit and exploded, causing ammunition in the hull to detonate, killing the Sister driving the vehicle.

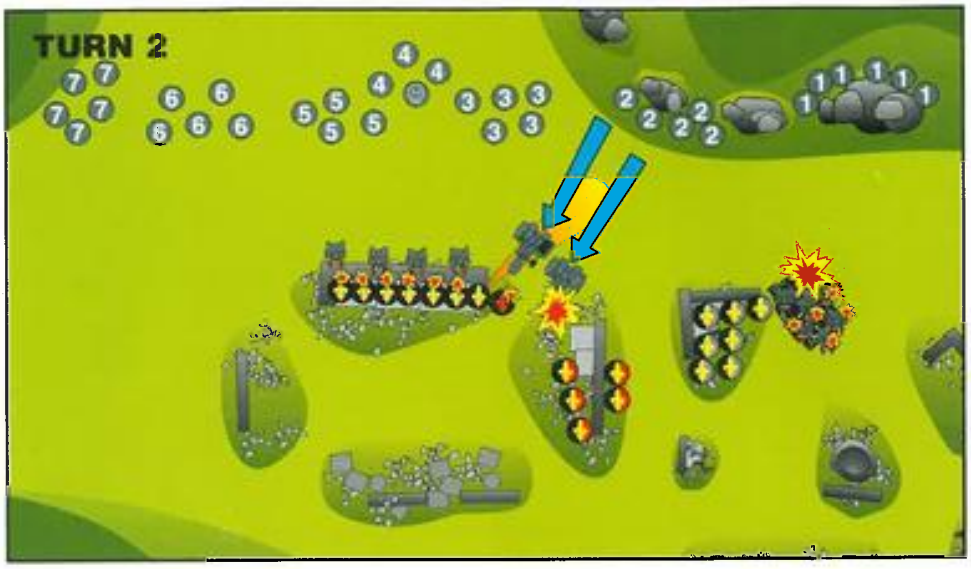
SISTERS OF BATTLE

The Battle Sisters were outraged by the sudden Necron onslaught and poured bolter fire into the advancing mechanoids – still to no effect, despite several visible impacts. Even Sister Superior Karena from Squad Sanctorus was unable to inflict any damage, despite scoring a direct hit on one of the Necron Destroyers. Only Sister Elana with her multi-melta managed to down another Necron Warrior, leaving behind only a molten slag of metal.

Then the Immolator rumbled into action. Unfortunately the crew misjudged the range of their heavy flamer and the sprouting flames didn't come close to the Necron Warriors. However, one Scarab was set on fire.



TURN 2



NECRON RAIDERS

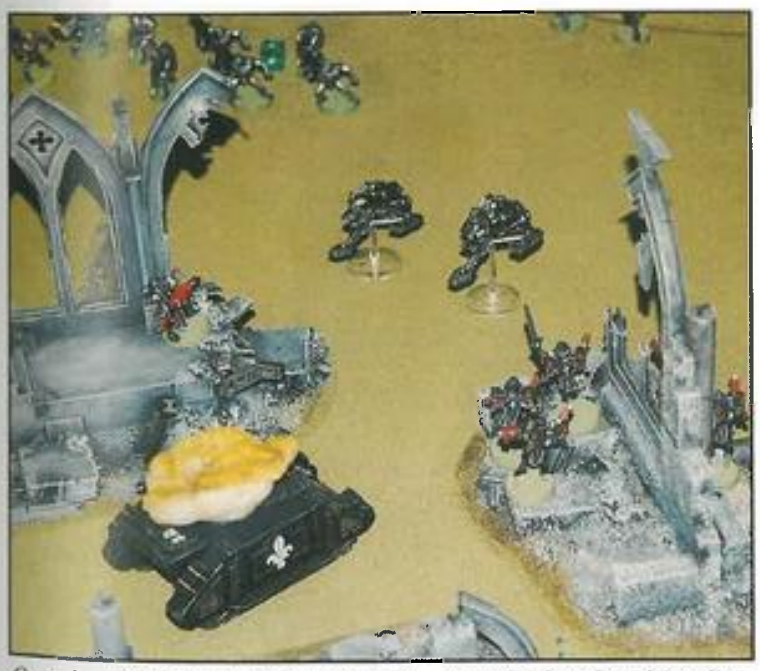
The Battle Sisters offered up a prayer to the Emperor as they saw one of the two downed Necron Warriors simply vanish, while the other one stood up again and rejoined the steady Necron advance!

Furthermore, the Necrons were swift to react to the potential danger of the Immolator on the right flank. Six Scarabs swooped down onto the tank's hull and started to eat away its armour plating with frightening speed. When the Necrons opened up on the tank, only minutes later, it blew up as if it was merely a toy. All the Scarabs but the one that was already on fire were destroyed in the explosion – but it was a small price to pay for the easy destruction of the tank.

At the same time Sister Purity observed that one of the Necron squads had started to move down the left in an attempt to outflank her and Squad Sanctorus in their position in the ruined cathedral. Peering out of her cover to watch the Necrons would cost her dearly – a lightning bolt fired by the Necron Lord, who had recognized her as leader of the defence, missed by mere inches. In the space of a heartbeat, Sister Purity heard the high-pitched shriek of the Necron Destroyers' turbines, and took a direct hit from one of their Gauss-Cannons. The hit was randomised between members of Squad Sanctoras and Sister Purity, who was close enough to benefit from squad coherency. Unfortunately it was Purity who was hit. The Battle Sisters of Squad Sanctorus could only watch in terror as Sister Purity was flayed before their eyes. But their resolve was unshakeable – in the service of their dead commander and the Emperor, they would fight to the death.

And death came quickly.

Seconds after Sister Purity's horrifying end, four Necron Warrior squads that had been advancing steadily, along with the second Necron Destroyer, opened up on the Battle Sisters' position in the ruined cathedral. The hissing noise of the Gauss-Flayer guns mingled with the dying screams of the brave Battle Sisters. Within moments Sister Sledge, clutching her smoking flamer, realised she was the only woman in the cathedral alive.



One of the Destroyers is hit by a hail of krak grenades from Squad Angelica.

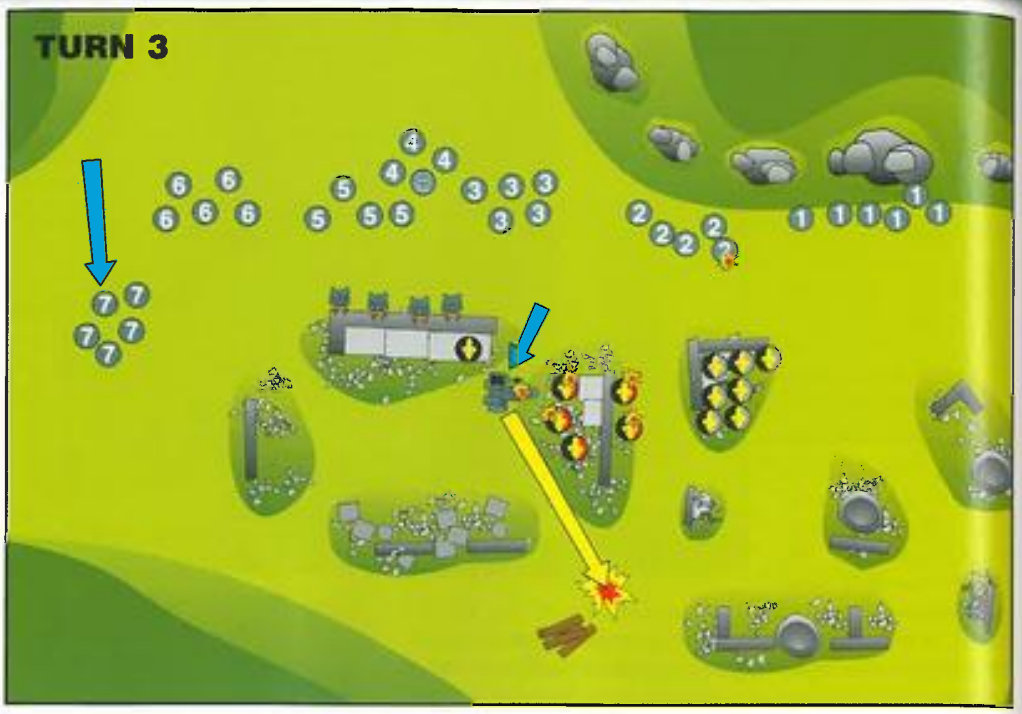
SISTERS OF BATTLE

The Warning Beacon hadn't been dispatched so the combat went on. Despite the death and terror that surrounded her, Sister Sledge leapt back into the attack. She brought her flamer to bear on one of the hovering Destroyers and squeezed the trigger, but the burning chemicals had no effect on the flying machine.

On the far flank, Squad Sistina gave up their hidden position and started to pour bolter fire into the advancing Necron ranks and one of the Necron Destroyers, but all the explosive shells just bounced of the Necron Warriors' armour. Only the Sister carrying the melta-gun proved lucky and finally destroyed the already burning Scarab.

Squad Angelica, defending the centre of the battle line, proved more successful in stemming the mechanoid tide. Four of them were in positions to throw krak grenades at one of the Necron Destroyers and amazingly all of them hit. The Skimmer's mechanisms were damaged and, more importantly, the Necron pilot was blown apart and the vehicle veered off, uncontrolled.

TURN 3



NECRON RAIDERS

Out of control, one of the Necron Destroyers smashed straight into the smoking Rhino wreck and both vehicles disappeared in a giant fireball. The second Necron Destroyer slowed down and turned on the obviously dangerous Seraphim squad, flaying one of them with its massive Gauss-Cannon. Two Necron Warrior squads also turned their attention to the Seraphim and opened fire. All but one of the elite Battle Sisters vanished in the Gauss-Flayer cross-fire.

On the left flank, two Necron squads broke into a jerking, mechanical run. Obviously they no longer considered the single remaining Sister from Squad Sanctorus as any kind of threat. Still, two Necron Warrior squads and the Necron Lord with his Staff of Light advanced on Sister Sledge, and poured an enormous amount of fire into her position amidst the ruined cathedral. The Battle Sister dropped down just in time, as large chunks of her cover started to disintegrate. Several rays from Gauss-Flayers even struck her power armour, but didn't penetrate. Sister Sledge was unharmed.

On the right flank, the Necrons continued their steady advance and started to fire on Squad Sistina, that had given away its position by firing at the Necrons earlier. Being in a defensive position, the Sisters were well in cover by the time the Necrons shot back, and none of them were hit.

SISTERS OF BATTLE

The Warning Beacon still hadn't been dispatched (much to Ian's consternation!). The surviving Necron Destroyer was now between the last of the Seraphim and Sister Sledge, the only survivor of Squad Sanctorus. Before Sister Sledge could bring her flamer to bare, the Seraphim pelted the alien craft with a deadly krak grenade. The Necron Destroyer careered out of control and smashed into the ground. Thick black fumes rose from the turbine exhausts, before the wrecked machine exploded seconds later.

The Battle Sisters from Squad Sistina also struck back; their sustained bolter fire finally downed a mechanoid from one of the several Necron Warrior squads advancing towards them. The squad's melta-gun missed, which was unfortunate as it was the weapon most likely to inflict any damage on the Necrons.

The last stand of Squad Angelica, with the resolute Sister Sledge looking on.

TURN 4

NECRON RAIDERS

Suddenly there was movement amidst the sea of fire that still engulfed the crashed Necron Destroyer. And then, to the disbelief of the Battle Sisters, the Necron Warrior who had piloted the machine came walking out of the fire, its red, glowing eyes scanning its surroundings. Its gaze fixed on Sister Michaella of Squad Sistina in the ruined industrial complex, then it started running towards her.

The Necrons now turn their full attentions to Squad Sistina

The Necron squads on the far left flank kept running as well, ready to swamp the ruined cathedral (which was by now only defended by one Battle Sister). The rest of the Necron army continued its steady advance and opened fire on squad Sistina, the last Seraphim and Sister Sledge. The Sisters of Squad Sistina were still in good cover and sustained no losses from the Gauss-Flayers, but the last remaining Seraphim died a horrible death in the rays of the Necron weapons. Although several squads, including the Necron Lord himself were now firing on Sister Sledge in the ruined cathedral, somehow she survived again. In a silent prayer she thanked the Emperor for her seemingly impenetrable power armour!

SISTERS OF BATTLE

The situation was getting desperate, the Warning Beacon still hadn't been dispatched.Waiting until the hostile fire died down, Sister Sledge took a deep breath and jumped up to fire her flamer at the nearest squad of Necrons, which was frighteningly close. Two of the metal monstrosities were engulfed by flames but didn't seem to suffer any damage. Despairing, Sister Sledge ducked back into cover.

Squad Sistina didn't fare much better; three Sisters fired on the Necron pilot who was running towards their position, but the presence of several Scarabs disturbed the firing mechanisms of their weapons and all of their shots went astray. Two more Sisters with bolters and the Sister with the melta-gun suffered the same misfortune – their weapons seemed to go haywire and they couldn't hit any of the advancing Necrons. The only weapon that didn't seem to be affected was the heavy flamer, which promptly downed one of the mechanoids, leaving only a smouldering wreck.

Ian desperately tries to find some dice that roll sixes so he can get the Warning Beacon to go off!

TURN 5

NECRON RAIDERS

Still unharmed, the Necron Pilot now charged Sister Michaella of Squad Sistina. The Necron squads that were slowly advancing on the position kept moving and firing, killing two more of the Battle Sisters. The situation grew more and more desperate, and it didn't look like any of the brave Battle Sisters would see another day.

On the far left flank the Necrons also continued their relentless advance. The squad furthest to the left had rounded the cathedral by now and opened fire on Sister Sledge from behind, but still she escaped injury. The Necrons right in front of the ruined cathedral were also firing at her, this time at close range – but almost miraculously, none of the deadly Gauss rays were on target. Still cowering down between large chunks of stone and metal, Sister Sledge awaited the next onslaught – this time from the Necron Lord himself and his accompanying squad of Necron Warriors. But again all of their shots went astray or bounced of her power armour.

In the ruined industrial complex on the right, the struggle between Sister Michaella and the charging Necron pilot was brief and one-sided; the human warrior stood no chance against the merciless onslaught of the machine. Disposing of the broken body, the mechanoid stormed into the next unfortunate Battle Sister.

SISTERS OF BATTLE

By this stage in the battle the beacon still hadn't been dispatched. Ian knew that if he could hold out for one more turn things could still go in his favour.

Back in the cathedral, the shooting seemed to die down for a moment. Sister Sledge used the opportunity to jump up again, finding herself almost face to face with some of the advancing Necrons. She squeezed her flamer's trigger and engulfed four of the steel monsters in a deadly firestorm. To her dismay none of the warriors showed any damage, and the skeletal steel constructions were coming closer and closer.

In the ruined industrial complex, the bolter fire of Squad Sistina was still disrupted by the presence of several Scarabs

"Why can't I kill Sister Sledge?" Markus rolls low! (Again!)

just beyond the ruins. Again, it was only the Sister with a heavy flamer that actually hit any targets, but although one of the Necron Warriors was set on fire, they all carried on advancing.

The Necron pilot still seemed unstoppable, killing the second Battle Sister in close combat and following up into the Sister with the heavy flamer.

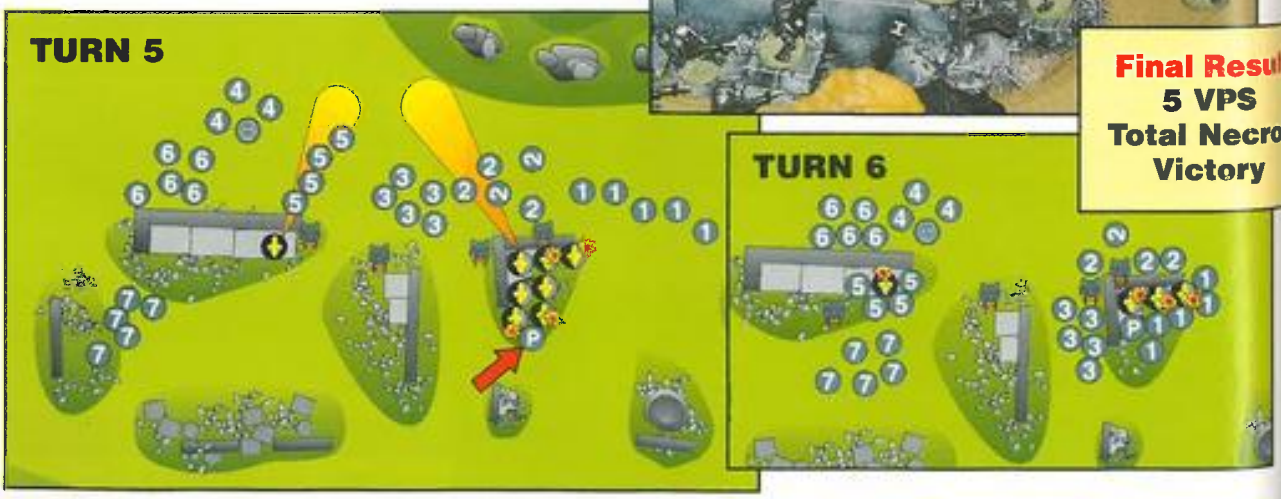
It appeared the struggle would be over soon.

TURN 6

NECRON RAIDERS

Most of the Necron squads were now in range to engage the last human warriors in close combat. The struggle in the industrial ruins was brief and bloody, as the defensive position was swamped with Necron Warriors. All of the brave daughters of the Emperor perished and weren't able to better a single Necron Warrior in hand to hand combat.

In the ruined cathedral, Sister Sledge was the last living being on the battlefield. She saw how easily her fellow Sisters on the far flank of the now shattered battle line were overcome by the inhuman, steel monstrosities. Then the first Necron Warrior closed in on her. Embracing death with no fear, a prayer on her lips and her gun blazing, the last thing she saw was a pair of red glowing eyes.



Final Result
5 VPS
Total Necron
Victory

EXTERMINATE!

Markus: Hmmm... This battle left me very thoughtful. Although I managed to completely annihilate the Sisters of Battle, I think it actually took me longer than it should have. There is one main reason for this: my initial movement. During the first two turns it looked like the battle would be a walkover and everything would be over by turn 4. But I made one very simple mistake: I didn't send any troops running down the right flank, like I did on the left one. To make things worse, I had a lot more luck with my shooting on the left hand flank, so all the opposition was wiped out before my flanking force came into action (not taking into account the single flamer-armed Sister that refused to die – but she was only a nuisance and didn't have any effect on the outcome of the game).

If I had sent a similar flanking force down the right I would have been able to engage the Sisters in close combat much earlier then I actually did. As close combat turned out to be far more effective then shooting at troops in hard cover, the game would probably have been over a turn or two quicker! I know, I know – I should have realised right from the start that close combat is far more effective then shooting at troops in cover, but I had no experience with the Necrons whatsoever, and didn't really know what to expect in this game.

In a way, the Sisters doomed themselves when they shot down the second Necron Destroyer. The Necron Warrior piloting the machine self-repaired and found itself behind enemy lines, all on his own. Being isolated, it was unable to use its Gauss-Flayer until it rejoined a unit, but in every other respect could fight normally, so I decided to charge it straight into Squad Sistina. When it dispatched the first Battle Sister so easily, I realized the Necrons' potential as close combat killing machines. They have a Weapon Skill of four, which makes them superior to many 'normal' troop types of other races. But even if they lose a close combat, their opponent can only use their own strength, not that of any close combat weapons. And with a Toughness of 5 and a 2+ armour save it becomes very difficult to kill a Necron Warrior in close combat!

My army hardly sustained any damage. The length of the game was a direct result of the fact that I didn't send my troops in fast enough, especially on the left flank, as I've said. The only losses I suffered were six Scarabs (okay, maybe it was over the top to pile six of them on one tank, but I wanted to be one hundred percent sure of destroying it), the two Necron Destroyers and a couple of Necron Warriors. In total only one Necron pilot and one Necron Warrior vanished completely, two others repaired themselves and two were down at the end of the game. The Necron Destroyers were an unfortunate loss, but they had done their share of destruction: they destroyed the Rhino (which could have been more lethal to my army than any gun if it had started running over my Initiative 2 Necrons), killed one of the Seraphim Sisters and Sister Purity herself!

All in all I enjoyed the game, and the fact that Ian knew beforehand that his whole army was going to die made him very relaxed, because all that counted was how dearly the Sisters of Battle would sell their lives. He (they) certainly did a good job, especially the accursed Sister Sledge, although her survival was down to my ridiculously bad dice rolling when it came to hitting her, and Ian's "I am personally protected by the Emperor" armour saves!

Hasta la vista, baby.

Necrons certainly are rock hard and I'm looking forward to collecting my own force and playing more games with them. Necrons look great, they cost a lot of points so you don't need a huge army, and they have a strikingly simple colour scheme – what more could you want?

DAMNATION!

Ian: Boy that was so close, if only I had survived for another turn and the beacon had gone off (6 VPs), I could have won. Its not as if my troops failed in their duty (especially Sister Sledge, who valiantly defended the ruined temple right up until the very last turn – a true heroine of the Imperium). I just couldn't roll a six!

As with all battles where the enemy happens to be a new race I was faced with a bit of an unknown quantity when choosing my army, and in retrospect I think it would have been wiser to have taken a third Battle Sister squad and armed every squad with krak grenades, rather than take the more expensive Seraphim who remained static for the entire game – taking assault troops was an odd choice in a game where I would be playing a defensive role.

The guidelines of the scenario we were playing allowed me to spend 25% of my points on vehicles instead of the usual 15% for Ministorum forces, and after Graham Davey pointed out that Necrons had an Initiative value of only 2 I decided that I would try to weaken the Necron advance by crushing as many of the alien scum under my tank tracks as possible!

Alas, it was not to be, as Markus swiftly despatched the Rhino with his skimmers and the Immolator was engulfed by a swarm of those totally hideous Scarabs! Tank commanders watch out!

My main successes during the game were taking out the Necron Destroyers and managing to hold out until the sixth turn! Unfortunately the Warning Beacon didn't go off, so I still lost the battle. The main body of the Necron forces were really hard to even wound, let alone kill, despite a hail of bolter fire from the Sisters (I needed 5s to wound and then they had a 3+ save!). The flamer weapons which are so characterful of Ministorum forces were just as ineffective against the Necron's Toughness of 5.

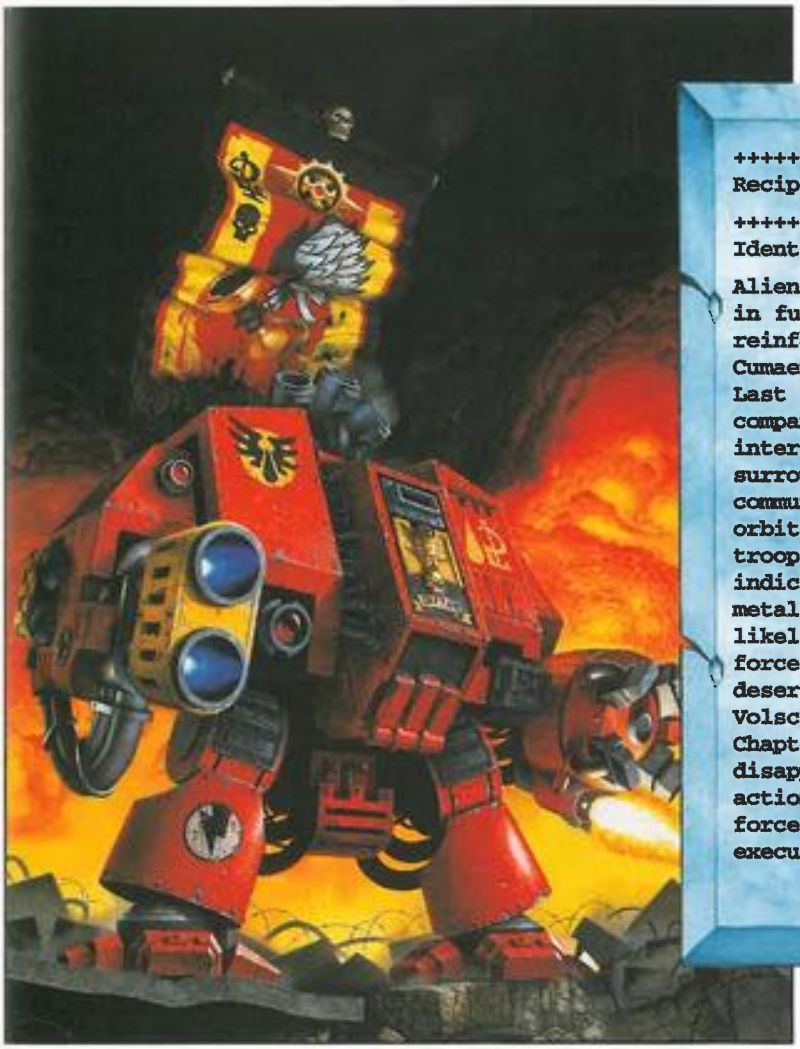
All in all, my small band of righteous fanatics were possibly too few and ill-equipped to deal any effective damage against the superior numbers and technology of their mysterious foes, but for now I'll take heart in the knowledge that I'll have my revenge, sometime, in the future, far from now, maybe...

WARHAMMER 40,000

AMBUSH AT VOLSCI GORGE

A battle report by Jim Butler and Andy Sharman

This months Warhammer 40,000 battle report is a clash between the Blood Angels Space Marines and the Eldar. Andy Sharman was in command of the pointy ears and got to include one of the new Fire Prism grav tanks in his force. Apart from having to deal with this new threat, Jim Butler's Space Marines would have to take on an Eldar army waiting to ambush them...



+++++ Comm-secure link alpha 7/910. Recipient Brother-Captain Lachesis +++++

+++++ Incoming Orders: Priority Primus, Ident-code Glaucus +++

Alien raiders in the Castor sector now in full retreat. Imperial Guard reinforcements en route to Strongpoint Cumaen overdue by 18.5 standard hours. Last reported in Volsci gorge area at company strength. Electromagnetic interference from ore deposits surrounding Volsci gorge limits communication to line of sight but orbital auguries show no vehicles or troops in gorge area. Thermal traces indicate recent heavy weapons fire and metallic debris. Estimate 72.7% likelihood of destruction of Guard forces by alien action, 23.2% chance of desertion. Proceed immediately to Volsci gorge area with available Chapter forces. Investigate disappearance of Guard column, take any action necessary to destroy alien forces in the area or undertake summary execution of traitors as required.

+++++++ Message ends +++++++

Ideas for Warhammer 40,000 battles come from different sources. An opponent might want to try out his latest weapon of destruction or perhaps a brand new character he's converted. Mission Cards are normally used to randomly generate a conflict between two opposing armies. Often these are a good starting point for a battle if chosen in a particular combination. The Mission Cards are based on situations that happen in real battles, and historical conflicts are also great for ideas. Sometimes a short story from a book that you've read recently, or from one of the Codex army books, can contain the germ of an idea that can be developed into a battle. Once you start with a theme, it's easy to get carried away and create whole campaigns based on an single idea. A battle can often spark off ideas for the next battle and the next. Look at old battle reports that we've printed in White Dwarf for ideas too.

VOLSCI GORGE

In the case of this month's battle report, the situation comes from a short piece of text written by Andy Chambers as a transmission between Imperial forces. The comm-link message, shown on the previous page, warns of alien raiders, in this case the enigmatic Eldar, who have destroyed an Imperial Guard column. The Blood Angels Space Marines are ordered to investigate. The battle would occur when the Blood Angels arrive on the scene to discover the Eldar attack. The ambush takes place in a gorge, so the battlefield would be set up like a valley with trees growing along the edges. The only cover in the centre would be some abandoned Imperial Chimeras and a wrecked Leman Russ, representing the stricken column. Dotted amongst them would be craters representing the remains of the firefight. The battle itself is based on two Mission Cards from Dark Millennium. The Blood Angels had to *Take and Hold* one of the Chimeras in the centre of the table which contained the surviving Imperial Guard command squad; the Eldar mission was simple, *Engage and Destroy* the enemy.

HIDDEN SETUP

We decided to introduce a twist in the tale for this battle. We wanted to represent the Blood Angels coming upon the scene of destruction without any preconceived knowledge of the forces they would be facing or their deployment. Using an idea based on the Epic 40,000 game, the Eldar player would deploy his forces as Hidden markers. In a regular game Eldar armies have a strategy rating of 4 and Space Marines a rating of 5. Normally this would mean that the Eldar, with the lower number, would set up first. The Space Marines, having the advantage of setting up second, would know exactly were the Eldar forces were and how best to combat them. Instead of setting up the Eldar troops as normal, markers were placed on the battlefield instead. There were markers for each of the squads and vehicles as well as five extra markers which were decoys. The Space Marine player would have to anticipate the Eldar set up, which would be a real challenge. It was agreed that the Space Marine player would be able to set up his troops in hiding (apart from his vehicles of course). After the Space Marines were deployed, the Eldar player would then reveal the numbers on all his markers and replace all those that represented troops and vehicles. After rolling for the first turn, battle was joined.

You may want to re-fight this battle yourselves. You can use the same forces or choose your own, depending on what models you have in your miniature collection. You might want to use a different combination of missions and use the hidden set-up idea. Do remember, Hidden markers are a special idea that we've come up with specifically for this battle and are not a part of the Warhammer 40,000 rules. You'll need to agree to use this idea with your opponent before you play the battle. In the case of Andy Sharman, who led the Eldar ambushers, and Jim Butler, who commanded the Space Marines, both combatants were more than happy to try out the idea.

Jim Butler

ANGELS OF DEATH

Aargh! The irony of it all! Here at GW weve been working to produce real, balanced armies for Warhammer and Warhammer 40,000. The first Warhammer 40,000 army we put together was the Biel-Tan army. So I knew exactly what I would be facing. Andy was going to need a very large bucket of Sustained Fire dice.

By contrast, the Blood Angels army in our cabinet is really just a collection of different units and not really collected as a viable force. Still, I could hardly complain – if Space Marines have one quality it's their flexibility. Of the models in the cabinet, my only real choice was whether to take the Devastator squad or the Assault squad. The heavy firepower on overwatch could take out any skimmers which popped up, but my mission was *Take and Hold*. I needed troops who could hop from cover to cover and pounce on the objective in the last turn. Besides, every time I've tried to outshoot an opponent with Space Marines I've come off badly. They might be good shots, but your opponent will always outnumber you, and has the advantage in a war of attrition. So, the Assault squad got the job.

In the end, I was reasonably happy with my army. I would probably have chosen different weapons for my Dreadnought, but what I'd got was pretty good. A multi-melta and a powerfist is a potent enough combination against any enemy.

My plan was to play cautiously for a couple of turns and then create a defensive ring around the objective. If I could hold out until the end I would have a chance of winning. I knew I was going to take an awful lot of casualties, and Andy had the Engage and Destroy Mission, so I had to try to stop him completely wiping out units.

DEPLOYMENT

I decided to deploy most of my army in hiding. Normally, just being behind a piece of cover is sufficient to protect your troops, but not against Skimmers. Their pop-up attacks allow them to see over intervening terrain. The Predator and the Terminators would be Andy's only targets in the first turn. I knew the Terminators (especially with two storm shields in the front) could absorb an awful lot of firepower, and I hoped Andy would jam some of his scary shuriken cannons and pulse lasers. As long as the assault cannon survived I wasn't too worried. I put the Techmarine close to the Predator, as I had a feeling his skills would be needed! Last job was to place the Scouts. The mountain on Andy's left flank was crying out to have a heavy bolter placed on it, so I happily obliged.

Losing the first turn didn't bother me too much; at least I would have the last turn in which to secure my objective.

Blood Angels Space Marines

BIEL-TAN

Andy Sharman

Selecting an Eldar army can be tricky at the best of times. You could go for a specialist force of Aspect Warriors, or a fast-moving scouting force containing jetbikes, Vypers and ground troops mounted in Falcons. It really comes down to how you are going to use the army, what force you are playing against and whether you know what scenario you'll be fighting.

This month I was to play a 2,000 point Warhammer 40,000 game against Jim Butler. I would be using the newly painted Eldar Biel-Tan army and Jim, Games Workshop's Blood Angels Space Marine Army. Who was going to lead my force? An Avatar running round in the Imperial lines, creating havoc, would have been fun, but I did not see this fitting in well with the idea of a scouting force. I opted for a Farseer, a powerful psyker, and armed him with a *Witch Blade, Psychic Hood* and *Eldar Spirit Stone,* to make sure he could take care of himself. As I looked over the troops at my disposal, the idea of an armoured scouting force came to me. The force would range far ahead of the main warhost, engaging in hit-and-run attacks on Imperial lines (this fitted in well with the scenario we were playing). My first choice was the armoured spearhead, consisting of two Falcon grav tanks and a Fire Prism grav tank, for support. Both Falcons were armed with pulse lasers and scatter lasers, this combination of weapons should keep Jim's Blood Angels from moving too far out of cover. The Fire Prism will be held at the back to ward off any vehicle or Dreadnought (one hit from its deadly prism cannon can blow apart any vehicle which comes into range). To back up my grav tanks I chose a fast moving unit of six jetbikes and two Vypers, one armed with a lascannon (to take care of any Space Marine Terminators) and the other with a shuriken cannon.

The second part of the scouting force consisted of four squads of Guardians, all armed with shuriken catapults (with a -2 armour save modifier these should hamper Jim's power armour saves). To help out in case my Guardians came under attack from Assault Marines, attack bikes or tanks, I included a five strong unit of Wraithguard and a Warlock champion.

DEPLOYMENT

We had decided that the Eldar would be set up using Hidden markers (this would represent the Eldar ambush on the Blood Angels, which were investigating a destroyed Imperial tank column). I would use the large wooded area on my right to screen my grav tanks, supporting jetbikes, and three squads of Guardians led by the Farseer and Wraithguard. Approaching through the trees would hopefully give me some cover if I failed to get the first turn. The last remaining Guardian squad was placed on my left in case any Space Marine units tried to outflank my force on that side. Last but not least, my scouts were placed deep inside the woods on the right, hopefully able to take down the Space Marine Landspeeder if Jim chose one.

Biel Tan Craftworld

BLOOD ANGEL ARMY

Captain: *Combi-Weapon, Conversion Field* and *Haywire Grenade.*

Codicier: *Force Rod* and *Refractor Field*

Techmarine: *Servo-arm.*

Terminator Squad: Sergeant with power sword, 1 with assault cannon, 1 with lightning claws, 2 with thunder hammer & storm shield.

Assault Battle Squad: jump packs, 1 with power axe, 1 with power fist, 1 with power fist and hand flamer, 1 with plasma pistol and chainsword, Veteran Sergeant with power sword.

Assault Battle Squad: jump packs, 1 with plasma pistol and chainsword, 1 with plasma pistol and power axe, 2 with power swords, 1 with chainsword.

Tactical Battle Squad: melta-gun.

Tactical Battle Squad: heavy bolter.

Scout Squad: Sergeant with chainsword, 1 with heavy bolter and 3 with swords.

Dreadnought: multi-melta and power fist.

Predator: 2 heavy bolter sponsons.

Land Speeder

BIEL-TAN ELDAR ARMY

Farseer: *Witch Blade, Psychic Hood, Spirit Stone*

Warlock Champion: *Witch Blade, Armour Piercing Ammo*

Guardian Squad: 5 with shuriken catapults

Guardian Squad: 5 with shuriken catapults

Guardian Squad: 5 with shuriken catapults

Guardian Squad: 7 with shuriken catapults

Eldar Scouts

Wraithguard

Eldar Jetbikes: 1 with a shuriken cannon

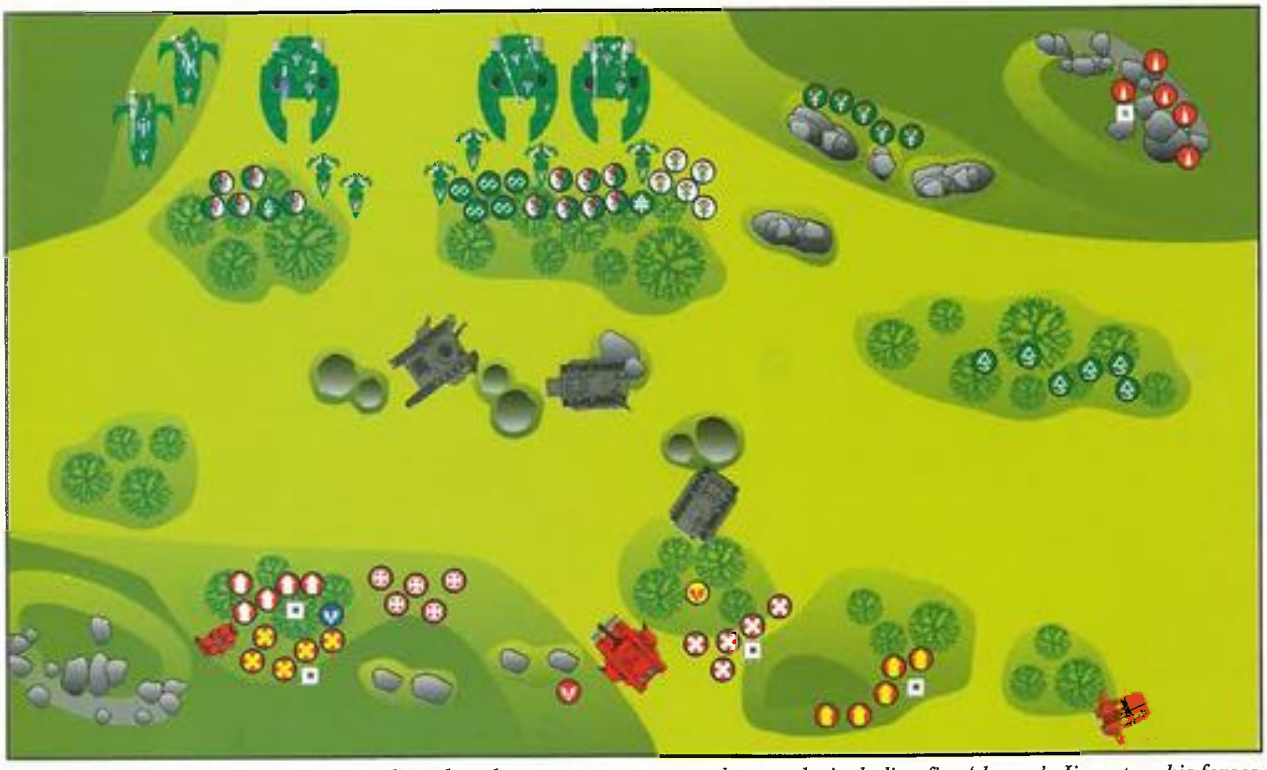
Fire Prism

Falcon: with scatter laser

Falcon: with scatter laser

Vyper: with shuriken cannon

Vyper: with lascannon



Andy set up the Eldar in secret. He used numbered counters to represent the squads, including five 'decoys'. Jim set up his forces, most of which he wisely declared to be hidden. Andy then revealed which of the counters were squads and which were decoys, deploying the squads by numbers.

ELDAR TURN 1

Ah, the hands of Fate had been kind to me (the first turn was mine). With a roar of anti-grav engines, the jetbikes launched over the woods and straight into the Blood Angels' line. The trap was sprung. All my ground forces moved forward to support the jetbikes and get within firing range. The only thorn in my side was going to be those Space Marine Scouts hiding in the rocks on the hill to my left. This was quickly solved by moving my Scouts and one Guardian squad into cover, ready to eliminate them in Turn 2.

The Predator and Terminator squad standing out in the open were just asking to be shot at, so I did just that. First the Prism Cannon annihilated the Predator with a single shot, blowing massive holes in its armoured hull and side sponson (Ha, so much for Space Marine armour). Two mighty Terminators fell to the combination of my jetbikes, Guardians and Falcon grav tanks, and in a typical show of Space Marine bravery they failed their Leadership test and became shaken.

Finally, the lascannon on the Vyper blasted off one of the Dreadnought's arms (shame it was only the close combat arm – better luck next time). My Farseer singled out the Terminator with the assault cannon and cast Mind War with Ultimate Force, but failed to roll a single 6 on seven dice (oh the shame).

"With a roar of anti-grav engines, the jetbikes launched over the woods and straight into the Blood Angels' line. The trap was sprung."

The Eldar heavy weapons blast away at anything that isn't in cover.

SPACE MARINE TURN 1

Andy opened up on my army with a hail of shuriken and laser fire. The prism cannon lived up to its headline billing and took out the Predator in a single shot. Basically, everything which wasn't hidden was either destroyed or damaged. Still, my assault cannon Terminator had survived (despite having been *Mind Warred* by the Farseer at the end of the previous turn). It was time to strike back.

First, the Space Marines lived up to their reputation as the best shots in the galaxy. My Scout with the heavy bolter opened up and scored five hits! However, I managed to roll three ones to wound, and only killed two Guardians. Now the Scouts had revealed themselves and would find themselves under a lot of fire next turn. My main concern was to take out the jetbikes – having such fast-moving firepower zooming unopposed around the tabletop would be a serious problem. Between the Terminator with assault cannon, the Dreadnought with its multi-melta and the assault squad's Frag grenades, I managed to shoot down four of them. Hurrah!

The best news of the turn came from my Techmarine, who managed to fix the crippled Predator. How he managed to repair a complete Predator engine is beyond me, but he did it. Lots of chanting and a few hammer blows, probably. The bad news was that my assault cannon had jammed, so I would have to do without its firepower until Turn 3. With not much to report from the Psychic phase I looked forward to Turn 2 with reasonable confidence.

As the Eldar forces began to march forward through the trees, the deafening roar of anti-grav engines filled the air. From their positions across the gorge the Space Marines could see the huge bird-like forms of Eldar grav tanks rise menacingly from behind the tall trees. The Falcons hung motionless above the battlefield for a few seconds before the high-pitched scream of deadly Eldar weapons cut the air.

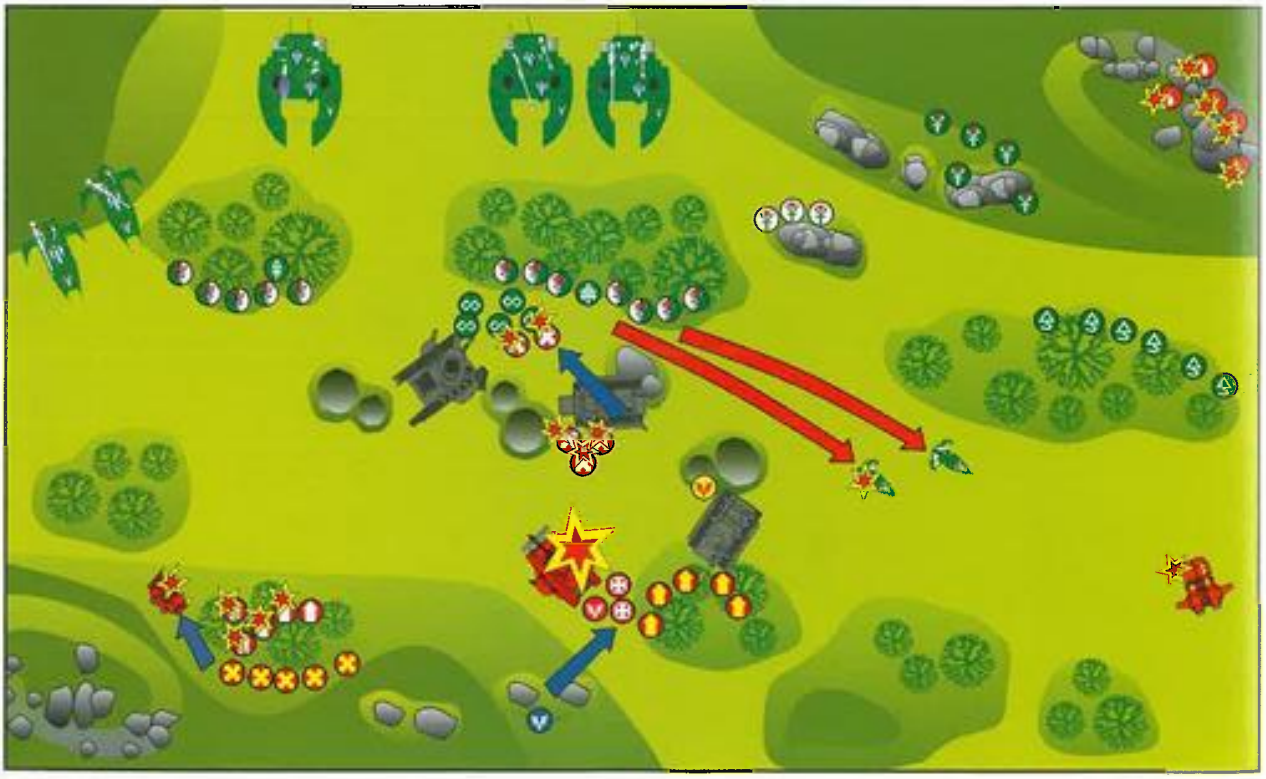
Streams of light blasted scarlet-painted targets, sending debris flying in all directions. Two Terminators crumpled to the ground. The Dreadnought was almost knocked from its feet as its powerfist exploded, and a huge cloud of smoke obscured the walking Imperial machine. Seconds later the Predator suffered the same fate as the Dreadnought. The Imperial battle tank was blown high into the air and crashed to the ground, a seemingly unrepairable wreck.

Almost straight away help was at hand. All eyes were on the Techmarine as he began to pick his way through the twisted metal. The Space Marines needed a miracle, and the Techmarine was just the man for the job.

ELDAR TURN 2

Oh! Four jetbikes out of six shot down. One more turn of firing like that and I wouldn't have any left, so in a last ditch attempt to get way, I raced them off towards the Imperial Landspeeder on which they opened fire (if they were going to go down I wanted to take something with them). The Landspeeder was engulfed in flames and sent crashing to the ground by a mass barrage of eleven hits from the jetbikes and three hits from one of the pulse lasers mounted on a Falcon.

Next my Scouts and Guardians opened up on the Space Marine Scouts in the rock outcrop. This one-sided shoot-out ended with the Space Marine Scouts being wiped out. With my left flank clear, it was time too concentrate on destroying the bulk of the Space Marine force. The Predator, fixed in Jim's turn, was going down. Having just moved into range, the Wraithguard fired. The Wraithcannon hit and penetrated the hull twice, killing all but one of the crew and blowing apart the engine (again). One of my Falcons and the Fire Prism fired at the Dreadnought. The mighty machine stood for a few seconds under a rain of bows, then toppled, crashing to the ground in a mass of flaming wreckage. My Guardians managed to take down another Terminator, and the Vyper squadron blasted the woods, killing four out of five Space Marines (pay back for my Guardians which were shot in the back by the Space Marine Scouts). The last shots were from my two Falcons, firing their shuriken catapults and taking out three of the Assault Marines who were in cover behind the abandoned Chimera. Jim's luck in the Psychic phase still held out, as I was only able to cast *Doom* on the Space Marine Techpriest and my *Guide* placed on one of the wraithcannons failed to kill the last remaining Space Marine in the woods. On the up side, Jim still hadn't cast any Psychic powers without them being nullified by my Farseer (that was four times in two turns now).



The Space Marine assault troops leap into combat with the Wraithguard, only to find the Farseer joining in the fray.

SPACE MARINE TURN 2

You know what pride comes before, don't you? I'd moved a lot of my troops forward, and although most were still in cover, they were no longer hiding. With the sheer volume of firepower at Andy's disposal, I suppose it was inevitable that he would hit some of them. He managed a second turn of firing without rolling a single Jam on his Sustained Fire dice, and even managed to take out my flanking Landspeeder with shuriken catapults.

"Incredibly, my Techmarine managed to fix the smashed up Predator – again."

Things were looking pretty grim. I was in grave danger of being wiped out completely, so my now depleted Assault squad charged the Wraithguard in an attempt to hold up the Eldar advance, and managed to kill two. The only shooting came from my Captain, who took out a jetbike with his combi-weapon. The rest of my army went into hiding, as I couldn't afford to sustain casualties at the rate I had done so far. Hiding went against all my principles, but it had the advantage of drawing Andy's tanks out from their cover, which I had to do now I had almost no long ranged weaponry. Incredibly, my Techmarine managed to fix the smashed up Predator – again. Even with only one crewman, it would be able to fire, and deny Andy victory points. In the Psychic phase my Librarian managed to cast his *Prescience* power for the first time, and it was just as well, as the re-roll helped him nullify another attempt to *Mind War* the assault cannon.

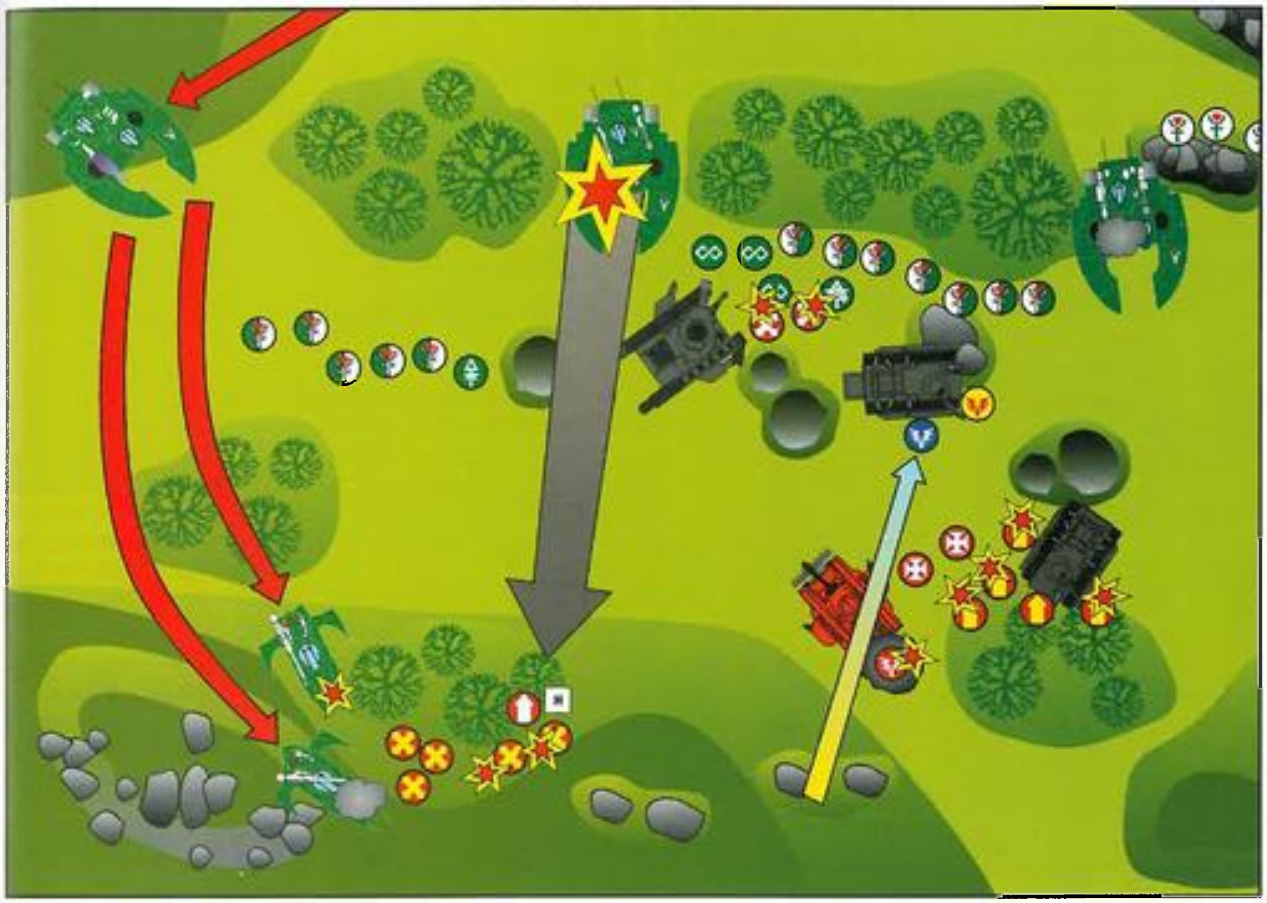
ELDAR TURN 3

Oh no, not again – did that Predator have nine lives or what? Well it was time to make my move and finish off what was left of Jim's Space Marine force. My Vypers shot forward and swung round the wood to get a clear shot at the Blood Angels Assault Marines, but only managed to kill two. The Fire Prism lined up with the Predator again, but the shot went wide, missing the Predator altogether and hitting the already *Doomed* Techpriest, atomising him in a split second (Well, every cloud has a silver lining). In the centre, the Guardians and one Falcon took down four more Space Marines in a shower of shuriken and scatter laser fire, but this was still not enough to break them.

Enraged by the destruction of the Wraithguard, the Farseer lifted his Witch Blade high above his head and charged into combat, killing one Assault Marine, the other dying when the Wraithguard he was in combat with imploded. On the left flank things were going badly. My Guardians poured all their fire into the Space Marine Captain, but were unable to hit him as he was in the cover of a crater. Then the large shadow of a Falcon fell over him, its weapons opening up at point blank range. But as the smoke cleared the Captain was still standing with only a few scratches in his armour. A low roll in my Psychic phase left me with only one power card and Jim's Librarian even escaped a *Daemonic Attack*.

"Enraged by the destruction of the Wraithguard, the Farseer lifted his Witch Blade high above his head and charged into combat, killing one Assault Marine, the other dying when the Wraithguard he was in combat with imploded."

As the Vypers cut down the Assault Marines, they return fire with their plasma pistols, destroying one and damaging another.



SPACE MARINE TURN 3

Turn 3 started in a depressingly familiar manner, when a scattering shot from the prism cannon wiped out my heroic Techmarine. But I knew I was in with a chance when my Captain survived three hits from a pulse laser, and my Terminators stood up to another withering hail of fire. The Assault squad was wiped out but managed to take another Wraithguard with them, and the Librarian survived a *Daemonic Attack* and *Teleported* onto my objective. It was time to hit back! My Captain hurled his Haywire grenade at the Falcon which had emerged from cover. Unfortunately, I only damaged the empty crew compartment, but at least it would give me a Victory point. Far more effective was the assault cannon, which raked the other Falcon with fire and sent it crashing into the ground (despite rolling another Jam!). Although the Predator failed to penetrate the Fire Prism, the three surviving Assault Marines behind the trees destroyed one Vyper and damaged the other. In the Psychic phase Andy tried to *Mind War* another Terminator, but this time the armoured Marine was within 6" of my Librarian, who revealed the *Destroy Power* he had been holding onto. I sighed with relief as *Mind War* disappeared into the Warp.

This was by far my best turn of the game, but I was still well behind on points. We went into Turn 4 with a real fight on our hands.

Jim continues to battle against the highly mobile Eldar threat (OK, I know it's only Andy!)

ELDAR TURN 4

What was happening? One moment I was annihilating Space Marines left, right and centre, then one of my Falcons is destroyed and the other one damaged, and my Vyper squadron is all but wiped out by return fire from the Assault Marines. In response I fired back with a hail of shuriken discs, but my luck had just about run out, as nearly every Sustained Fire dice I rolled jammed. The last jetbike hit but failed to wound the Space Marine with the melta-gun, which lost me some victory points for not totally destroying the Tactical squad. The Terminators in the centre were hit ten times by my Guardians and damaged Falcon, but they made all their saves again (that accursed storm shield saved five hits alone). Then to cap it all, both my remaining Wraithguard hit the Terminators with their wraithcannons, but instead of being killed, they were moved 6" straight toward my Guardians (No! They were now within charge range).

Jim successfully rolls all his saves for the Terminators which were hit ten times!

My only ray of hope this turn came once again from the Fire Prism, which finally destroyed that @"*% Predator! In the Psychic phase, my Farseer tapped into the additional psychic power from his *Spirit Stone* to draw four warp cards from the deck. With this extra power my Warlock unleashed a devastating surge of psychic power in casting *Destructor*, but placing the template down, I was just out of range. Well, the Space Marine would have to move next turn or be hit when the template moved forward. *Guide* was nullified and my last move was to cast *Fortune* on the Farseer to give all the Eldar within 8" a +2 bonus to their saving throws.

"My only ray of hope this turn came once again from the Fire Prism which finally destroyed that @"$#*% Predator!"

Left: The remnants of the Assault Marines destroy the Fire Prism with Krak grenades.

Right: The Terminators charge into the Guardians and, after killing three of them, the Eldar break and flee into the woods.

SPACE MARINE TURN 4

Although I lost a few more Tactical Marines, I had one survivor from each combat squad, and this would drastically reduce the number of Victory points I gave away. Andy's luck really equalled out as the jams came thick and fast, including his remaining pulse laser. He did finish off the Predator with the prism cannon (which was only fair; after all, it was the third time he had destroyed it!) but his Wraithguard failed to finish off the Terminators, and the dreaded Psychic phase left my battered force miraculously unscathed.

My only chance of victory was to take out all of Andy's remaining vehicles, but then Andy reminded me that the assault cannon had jammed. My Assault Marines were probably out of charge range of the Fire Prism, but their jump landed them within grenade throwing distance of the Eldar vehicle. The Captain hit the remaining Falcon with his combi-melta, but failed to penetrate, and when the Tactical Marine with the melta-gun (who had been hiding in the woods for two turns) penetrated but failed to destroy the last jetbike, I thought my last attack was about to fizzle out. My Assault Marines saved the Chapter's honour when one of their Krak grenades penetrated the Fire Prism's engines and blew the machine out of the sky. The Terminator with the jammed assault cannon had charged the Guardians in front of him, and enraged by his weapon's inability to fire once again, he tore into them and routed them.

The final Psychic phase saw my Librarian lose a power to a *Psychic Duel,* but it mattered not, as the battle was over, and it was time to count up the Victory points.

VICTORY POINTS
ELDAR: 21
SPACE MARINES: 16

20/20 HINDSIGHT - Andy's lap of honour

Well, everything went more or less according to plan. This was mainly due to two excellent turns at the start of the game. The Fire Prism was a real ace in the hole – its mere presence forcing Jim to hide most of his army for the first two turns (what was not hidden was destroyed in the first turn of firing). Enough self-congratulation; time to take a long hard look at what really went on. I always find it hard going back over a battle report, because it is very easy to pat yourself on the back and gloat over how well your army did, rather than look at what mistakes you made and what you could have done better.

A minor annoyance was the Space Marine Scouts, but they only damaged one Guardian squad before being wiped out in Turn 2 by my Scouts and Guardians. I do have to point out that the Guardians armed with shuriken catapults were excellent (before I've only ever taken one or two squads, never four), they went toe to toe with the best the Imperials could offer. Looking back I made quite a few small but shameful mistakes. One was not using my Farseer and Warlock champion enough, in fact only one Assault Marine was killed by the Farseer. Even though I did rule the Psychic phase, I was dealt the Eldar psychic powers that would enhance my armies abilities (*Battle Fate, Fortune* and *Guide*) when I would liked to have had more destructive powers like *Executioner,* because my Farseer could have dealt with all of the Blood Angels characters and that Terminator with the assault cannon. But my biggest flaw, and this is a classic mistake; I started to play and completely forgot about the victory conditions! I should have used all my force to wipe out whole squads, not leaving one or two models in a squad to run away and hide. Also, any model that got near the Chimera should have been reduced to nothing more than a smoking crater, to deny Jim his primary objective, which gave him 5 Victory points just for having someone standing there.

I will say that moving my grav tanks into the open in Turn 3 was a bit careless. With Armour Value 18 all around, even grenades can blow them out of the sky (the bigger they are, the harder they fall). I should have kept out of range, making pop-up attacks or got them at least up to fast speed. This would have minimised my own losses and saved me a few victory points here and there. Overall, I think my deployment and battle plan were sound. I managed to destroy the Blood Angels flanking forces and then turn the centre into a killing ground. The only problem was the fact that my grav tanks were destroyed in Turn 3, because they could have caused a lot more trouble for Jim (had he not blow them out of the sky). Luckily, the few mistakes I did make were small enough not to lose me the battle.

"But my biggest flaw, and this is a classic mistake; I started to play and completely forgot about the victory conditions!"

Well I did my best and it was an exciting game to play. It really got moving in the last two turns and it could have gone either way. I guess I'll just have to do better next time and hopefully not leave a Space Marine standing on the battle field. Can't wait for the rematch…

BOWED BUT UNBROKEN - Jim's Lament

I really can't find it in my heart to be disappointed, despite losing on points. At the end of my second turn, it looked as though I was going to be annihilated, so to capture my objective and finish only 5 points behind was really satisfying. Most importantly, it was a really exciting game, with lots of carnage on both sides. Once again the Eldar proved to be deadly but somewhat fragile. The Space Marines showed that they can take an awesome amount of damage and still remain an effective fighting force.

In hindsight I don't think I would have made many changes to my force or the way I deployed. 2,000 points isn't that much for a Space Marine army, so if I was fighting the battle again, I would probably have asked Andy if he minded me using Jervis's tournament rules. This would have allowed me to buy combat squads of five Marines, and would have meant I could have had some Devastators. Maybe I should have concentrated my deployment more, but I was worried about bunching up too much and attracting fire from the prism cannon. Andy's grav tanks caused horrific casualties, but their armour isn't that good. Maybe I should have been more aggressive and gone after them sooner. I toyed with the idea of teleporting in my Terminators, but the extra points cost didn't really justify it. If you get lucky it can be a real battle winner, but you can just as easily find yourself stranded in the open.

Eldar weaponry is extremely potent, and that even includes the most basic of arms. Against massed shuriken catapults, Space Marine power armour doesn't offer a great deal of protection, but my Terminators were magnificent. The idea of using thunder hammer and storm shield armed Terminators worked perfectly (the storm shield gives an unmodified 4+ save from the front).

I think my only real mistake was moving my Assault squad out of cover a turn too early, but I was worried about Andy overrunning the objective before I did. It would be quite difficult to shift Wraithguard or even a squad or two of Guardians on overwatch. It was rather generous of him to bring his grav tanks out of cover, but it must have looked to him as if I had nothing to retaliate with by that point in the battle, and if he had denied me the objective, it would have been a crushing victory.

The new Eldar tanks are, I have to say, extremely powerful, but they have one serious flaw. Their armour (18 all round) is a couple of points lower than most other battle tanks, which is actually quite crucial once they stop popping up and come out of hiding! This makes them vulnerable even to heavy weapons like assault cannons and krak missiles, which normally struggle to penetrate a battle tank's hull or turret (the frontal armour of a Leman Russ turret is 25, making it invulnerable to these weapons). A Dreadnought or two with these weapons set on Overwatch would certainly deter any Eldar Farseer from popping up his grav tanks without counting the cost first. I have two words for any general facing these awesome machines: Good Luck!

WARHAMMER EPIC 40,000

One of the great things about WH40K and Epic 40K is that they are interchangeable. This means that you can quite easily take the same army in Epic 40K and in WH40K. Below are the the forces in this battle report. If you want to do this to your games simply compare your army to the relevant Epic detachment list and replicate each unit.

We've put together forces to represent the armies in this issues battle report here. Games Workshop's Epic 40,000 Space Marines are in fact painted as Imperial Fists rather than Blood Angels, but who cares – they both kill Eldar with equal abandon!

WARHAMMER 40,000

LAST STAND AT GLAZER'S CREEK

A battle report by Jervis Johnson, Paul Sawyer, Adrian Wood and Graham Davey

This month's battle report is inspired by the classic war film *Zulu!*, which recounts the tale of a group of British soldiers attacked by wave after wave of Zulus in 1879. In this battle the Praetorian XXIV Imperial Guard regiment would try to survive a series of relentless Ork assaults. The engagement is a continuation of the 'Massacre at Big Toof River', the mega-display featuring the Imperial Guard battling with the Orks at last years Games Day event. Over to Jervis...

THE BATTLE OF GLAZER'S CREEK

Glazer's Creek is a narrow tributary of the Big Toof River, that stretches away to the north-west of its parent. Located close by the creek and some five miles from Big Toof River itself is the remains of an old farm, once owned many years ago by one Conrad Glazer, the man who gave his name to the creek. However, Glazer disappeared many years ago and his farm was little more than a ruin when the men of the 3rd Platoon, A Company, 24th Praetorian Imperial Guard Regiment set up camp there.

3rd Platoon had been left behind to guard Glazer's Farm after their Chimera transport vehicles were lent to the rest of A Company in order to make it fully mobile for the attack on Big Toof River. Without their Chimeras the 3rd Platoon could not hope to keep up with the main column, and in any case somebody needed to be left behind to protect the 24th Regiment's supplies. The platoon was joined by several civilians that were accompanying the 24th Praetorians on the campaign, but deemed to be a liability for the main attack.

As the civilians and men of 3rd Platoon made themselves as comfortable as possible amongst the ruined farm buildings, they could have had no inkling of what was to happen to their comrades at Big Toof River. A full description of the battle has appeared elsewhere, so suffice to say that the 24th Regiment ran into an Ork ambush and was all but annihilated. The survivors were forced to flee away to the north-east – away from the victorious Orks, but away from Glazer's Creek as well. The men of 3rd Platoon were therefore cut-off from the main bulk of the Imperial army, and unaware of what had happened at Big Toof River. Then a cloud of dust was spotted on the horizon. The Praetorians expected it to be the rest of the regiment returning from an easy victory. In fact it was the first wave of an Ork tide that would batter the defenders of Glazer's Creek with a series of assaults...

Paul sees the size of the first wave of Orks, and thinks Adrian is having a laugh...

HOW THE SCENARIO WORKS

Jervis Johnson

Jervis: Last Stand at Glazer's Creek is really a series of battles that pits the horribly outnumbered Imperial Guard defenders against successive waves of Ork attacks. It is inspired by the 19th century Battle of Rourke's Drift, but more specifically by the stone-cold classic war film *Zulu!* which covers that battle. If you can beg, borrow or steal a copy of the film on video and watch it before playing the game, you'll find that the game is simply much more fun to play (you'll also find yourself saying things like "First rank FIRE!, second rank FIRE!" and "Don't point that bloody chainsword at me!" which adds to the fun too). But I digress…

In this scenario the Imperial Guard defenders are horribly outnumbered and must attempt to fight off wave after wave of Ork attackers. However, the defenders include several tough characters, the Guardsmen have an excellent defensive position, and they also benefit from the uncoordinated nature of the Ork attacks. The Orks on the other hand have lots and lots of Boyz, and know that given enough time they will wear the defenders down – the only problem is that they only have enough time to make a limited number of attacks before they must pull back to their main camp.

The rules below explain how to pick the forces, set up the table, and play the game. Please note that while the Ork army should be quite easy to field (though you will need to have access to at least sixty Ork or Gretchin models), the Imperial Guard army list is very specific and tells you exactly what models to use. If you don't have the right models, feel free to modify the list to suit your own collection, and/or use 'stand-ins' for the models you don't have (i.e. use a mortar to represent the autocannon, etc).

OBJECTIVES

The objectives for each side are very simple: the Praetorians must survive and the Orks must wipe them out (none of those namby-pamby Victory points in this scenario!) More specifically, if at the end of any assault there are no defenders left standing, then the Orks have won. If there are still defenders alive at the end of the final assault, the Praetorians win the day.

SETTING UP THE TERRAIN

Last Stand at Glazer's Creek is played on a 4'x4' gaming area, and the Praetorian player sets up the terrain for the game. He must set up Glazer's Farm, and may set up any other terrain he likes. Glazer's Farm must include at least one building, but apart from this restriction the terrain may include any number of buildings, walls or other items that seem appropriate. Note that as the Praetorian player sets up all the terrain he can create a perfect defensive position with loads of cover for himself and almost none for the Orks. This is deliberate!

IMPORTANT: In this scenario, terrain never slows down Ork movement, though the Imperial defenders do get the benefit of a defended obstacle if the Orks attack over it. In addition Orks can clamber over walls by simply measuring the height of the wall and knocking this off their normal move. The reason for this rule is simply to stop the Imperial player from surrounding the farm with impassable or difficult terrain which would make for a very boring game all about shooting rather than close combat – which is not what we want at all!

ORK ASSAULTS

Instead of playing a single game, this scenario is played as a series of games. Each game represents one of the Ork assaults on Glazer's Creek. The Orks get a randomly determined army for each game, while the Praetorians get to use only the models that survived the previous battle.

Assaults	Extra Troop Rolls
3	+4
4	+2
5	+0

Before the first game the Ork player must secretly write down how many assaults he will make. He may choose any number from three to five. Choosing a high number will give the Ork player longer to wear down the defender, but will mean that he has less extra troops for the final assault.

ORK ARMY

The Ork army is determined randomly by rolling twice for leaders and six times for troops on the table below. I've deliberately set up the table so that the Orks get little in the way of long-range firepower. This is to encourage them to attack the farm, rather than sit around and snipe at the defenders. If you roll up some troops that you don't have, they can be replaced by an Ork or Gretchin mob, while unavailable leaders are simply ignored. This means that Ork players will need to have at least 60 Ork or Gretchin models in order to play this scenario, but as this just happens to be what comes in the Warhammer 40,000 boxed game I can't imagine this will present much of a problem.

D6	Leaders	Troops
1	Shooty Stuff	Bike or Buggy
2	Nob	Boyz
3	Nob	Boyz
4	Nob	Boyz
5	Nob	Boyz
6	Nob	Nobz or Boarboyz

Note: When we originally fought the scenario, Adrian rolled THREE times (not twice as above) for the Leaders and managed to roll up a Warboss in three of the assaults. It seemed reasonable that a Warboss would be at all the assaults and so in addition to the troops rolled up randomly each assault is led by an Ork Warboss. The Warboss is armed with the equipment actually shown on the model itself.

Bike or Buggy: A single War Buggy, Wartrak, Scorcher, or Warbike. The vehicle is armed with whatever weapons are actually on the model. If you roll up more than one buggy result in a wave, then all of the vehicles must be combined into a single squadron. No more than one vehicle of the same type may be taken per assault.

Boyz: A single mob of 10 Orks armed with bolters or bolt pistols and axes, or a mob of 10 Gretchin armed with autoguns.

Nob: A Nob armed with any equipment actually shown on the model itself, or a Nob on a Nobz bike. A Nob on foot must lead a mob of Boyz or Gretchin.

Nobz or Boarboyz: A single mob of Nobz, Stormboyz or Boarboyz. The mob has 5 models and the models are armed with whatever weapons the model is actually carrying.

Shooty Stuff: A single Dreadnought (armed with any equipment actually shown on the model itself), or a Mekaniak with a Shokk Attack Gun, or a Weirdboy with three Minderz, or a single piece of Ork field artillery (i.e. Splatta Kannon, Pulsa Rokkit, Smasha Gun, Squig Katapult). No more than one model of the same type may be taken per assault.

FERAL ORK RULE: All Ork Boyz in this scenario have +1 WS and -1 BS. Now, although I could justify this by saying that the Orks who made up the attackers were a rather primitive lot who weren't much good at shooting, the actual reason for the rule is because it pretty much forces the Orks to try to capture the farm by assaulting the defenders rather than shooting them (see comments above about boring shooting matches). Note that the modifier does not apply to Gretchin models, only to Ork Boyz.

DEPLOYING FOR BATTLE

The Praetorians set up anywhere on the table at least 12" from a table edge, except that any wounded models must set up in the hospital building in the farm (see the rules for wounded models below). Praetorians may set up in overwatch, but can't set up hidden (the Orks are watching them from the hills!).

After the Praetorians have set up, number the edges of the table 1 to 4. The Ork player then picks any two adjacent edges and numbers them 5 and 6. He then rolls a D6 for each unit, and they move on within 12" of the centre of the table edge with that number. Note that because the Ork player gets to pick an extra couple of numbers for two table edges, he can choose the area where the bulk of his troops will (probably) set up. The Ork player can change the table edges he picks to be numbered 5 or 6 at the start of each assault. Remember that a separate roll is made for each unit.

FIGHTING AN ASSAULT

Once both sides have set up, you are ready to fight the assault. The Ork player gets the first turn. The battle continues until either there are no Praetorians left in play, in which case the Orks win, or there are less than thirty Ork models in play. Bike or buggy models, and any Shooty Stuff plus their crews, count as five models if they have taken no damage, one model if damaged at all or a crew member is killed, and zero models if destroyed. The Warboss, Boarboyz and Nobz count as one model each.

IMPORTANT: This is a fight to the death for both sides, and so all units are immune to psychology and will not break.

If the Orks are reduced to less than thirty models the assault ends immediately in an Ork defeat. If this was the final assault then the Praetorians win. If not, the Praetorians must tend to their wounded, and then you can play out the next assault.

THE FINAL ASSAULT

At the start of the third Ork turn of the final assault, the Ork player rolls again on the troops table. The number of rolls is determined by the number of assaults the Orks have made (see the rules for Ork assaults above).

DESTROYED VEHICLES

Vehicles destroyed during an assault must be left in play as wrecks. Damaged vehicles that can't move off are left in play too, but count as being destroyed in future assaults (it's assumed their crew has run off!). This rule has several effects; it creates cover and makes the table-top look more interesting for a start, and it also limits the Orks' ability to keep on using the same vehicle in more than one assault.

PRAETORIAN WOUNDED

Praetorian models that are 'killed' during an assault need to be kept to one side until the end of the battle. If the Orks are fought off, roll a D6 for each model on the table below:

Dead models can't be used in any future assaults, while models that suffer a flesh wound will be fighting fit and able to take part in the next assault. Models that have been seriously wounded have to go to the hospital, but you can roll for them again on the table below at the end of the next assault.

D6	Result
1-2	Dead: Add another white cross to the graveyard
3-4	Serious Wound: It's hospital for you m'lad.
5-6	Flesh Wound: Get back in the ranks ya malingerer!

THE HOSPITAL

One of the buildings that makes up Glazer's Farm must be designated as the hospital. Seriously wounded models are sent here, and they may recover as described above.

In addition, it is assumed seriously wounded models have their weapons by their beds, and if an Ork moves within 4" of the building, the seriously wounded models inside may get up and fight! Roll a D6 for each seriously wounded model if an Ork moves to close. On a roll of 4+ the model gets out of bed and fights. Add +1 to the dice roll during the final assault. Seriously wounded models have 1 wound, and all of their other characteristics (including movement and leadership) are reduced by 1 point. Set them up anywhere you like within or touching the doorway of the building.

Once 'activated', seriously wounded models will fight for the rest of the battle, but then have to make a roll on the injury table at the end of the battle to see if their exertions have caused a relapse.

Praetorian

SQUAD JENKINS

- S — SERGEANT
- F — FLAMER 'PRIVATE SIMPSON'
- 1 — TROOPER X 6
- G — AUTOCANNON GUNNER
- L — AUTOCANNON LOADER

SQUAD JONES

- S — SERGEANT
- M — MELTA-GUN TROOPER
- 1 — TROOPER X 6
- G — HEAVY BOLTER GUNNER
- L — HEAVY BOLTER LOADER

HEAVY WEAPONS SQUAD

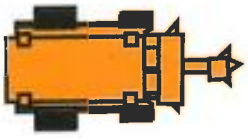
- G — MORTAR GUNNER
- L — MORTAR LOADER

- G — LASCANNON GUNNER
- L — LASCANNON LOADER

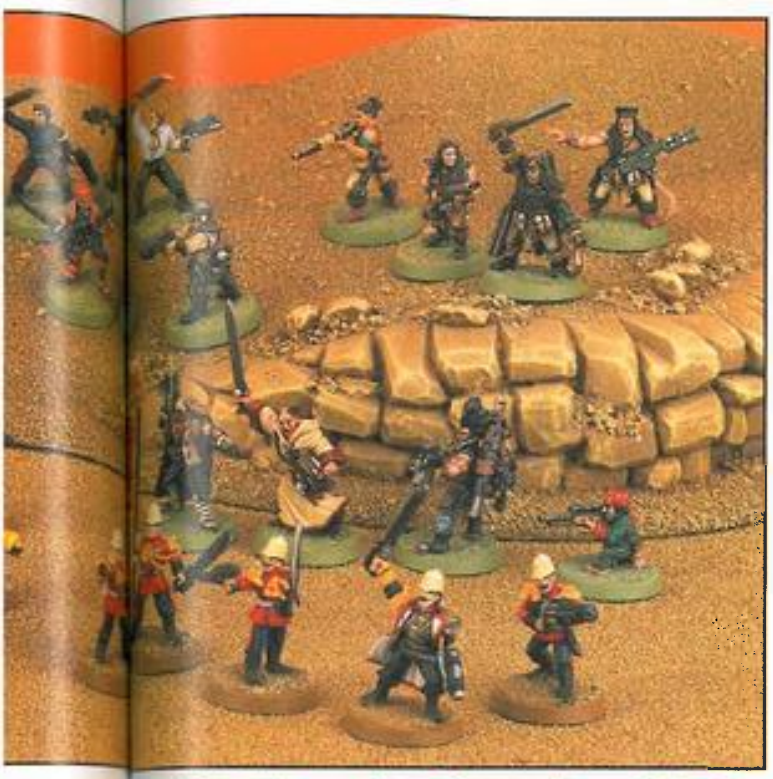
- G — LASCANNON GUNNER
- L — LASCANNON LOADER

COMMAND SQUAD DAVIES

- C — CAPTAIN CAINE
- TROOPER X 3
- G — GRENADE LAUNCHER TROOPER



FARM TRUCK WITH HEAVY BOLTER



Somebody's nicked Fat Bloke's bacon butty!

Paul: So, I'm taking command of the Praetorian XXIV. I've watched *Zulu!* more times than I care to remember and it brings a lump to my throat and a tear to my eye every time. The thought of a handful of soldiers, miles from home, with only a few local scouts and hastily erected fortifications for help, is the stuff of legends. If I can see the valiant guardsmen through the coming ordeal I'll be a happy man.

Well, I can't rely on locking the local priest in the outhouse to secure victory – I'll need a much stronger battle strategy than that…

My master plan revolves entirely around not having a master plan. As the scenario stands there are only two certainties. I'll be facing a large number of randomly generated Orks who will hit me in wave after wave of green death and I'll be burning off a lot of calories through nervous tension. Neither is a welcome prospect and so the best option open to me is to make it up as I go along and put my trust in Overwatch!

As the only objective I have for this game is to have at least one defender alive at the end of the final assault, I will gradually redeploy the troops I have left as each assault takes its toll. Apart from that, I've just got to fight off a veteran Ork player with an army I've never used before…

THE CIVILIANS

Anyone who has seen *Zulu!* will know that it's not just soldiers that took part in the defence of Rourke's Drift, there were civilians there too. I wanted this aspect of the film to be reflected in our refight at Glazer's Farm, and to this end we included a number of civilians in the defence force. We used a motley collection of miniatures to represent the civilians, drawing on models from the Studio's Necromunda and Adeptus Ministorum armies. All were armed with the weapons actually depicted on the models themselves.

CIVILIANS

- G — FARMER 'GLAZER'
- H — VETERAN SCOUT 'BLIKK'
- R — RATLING SNIPER 'HOOKY'
- S — SCRIBE 'PARCHETT'
- H — MENIAL CHAMPION ARMED WITH PLASMA PISTOL
- C — MENIAL CHAMPION ARMED WITH AUTOPISTOL AND SWORD
- ● — MENIALS/SCOUTS X 8

Farmer Glazer: The owner of Glazer's Farm who has been living as a hermit in the hills, but has returned to help defend his old homestead against the Orks. He is an independent character and has Imperial Guard Hero characteristics.

Veteran Scout Blikk: Some-time hired scout and some-time bounty hunter, Blikk carries a huge array of weapons, including a single *stasis grenade*. He is an independent character and has Imperial Guard Hero characteristics.

Ratling Sniper Hooky: A rogue who has feigned illness to avoid taking part in the Battle Of Big Toof River. He is an independent character and has Ratling Hero characteristics (see the Codex Imperialis for Ratling Hero stats).

Scribe Parchett: An Administratum scribe sent to record the outcome of the campaign for Administratum records. He is an independent character and has Imperial Guard trooper characteristics.

Menials: Two units, one of six models and one of four, each led by a champion. With the exception of the champions, the models have Imperial Guard trooper characteristics.

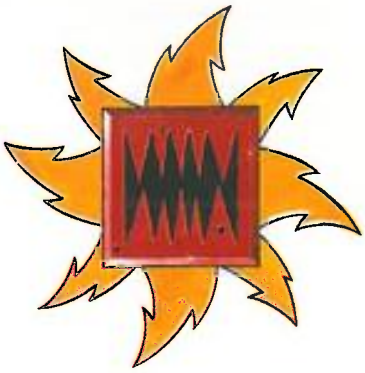
Farm Truck: This vehicle can be driven by any of the models in the defending force. It has the same speed and armour as an Ork buggy, and is armed with a heavy bolter.

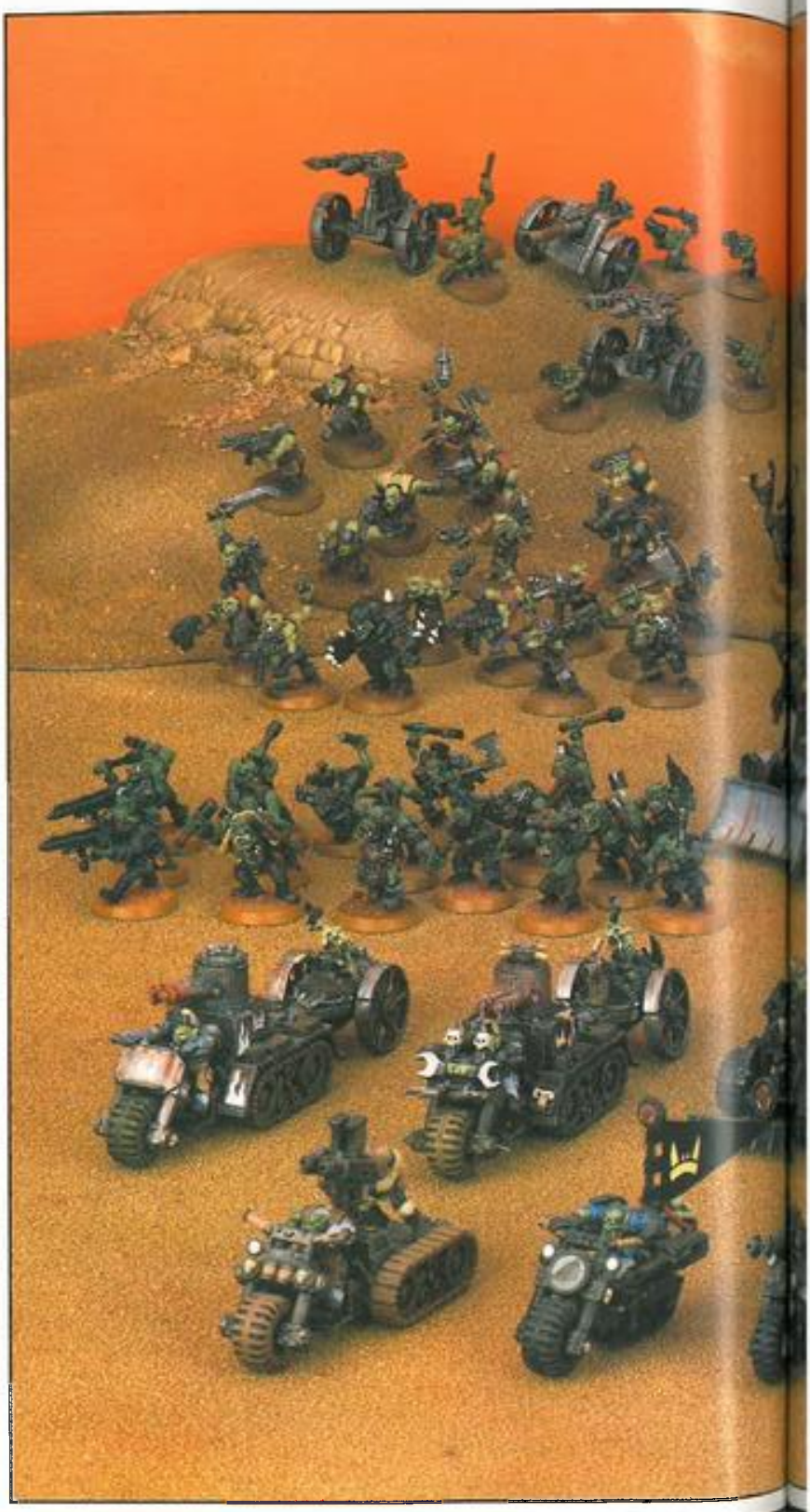
WAAAGH! GRISHNAK

Grand Warlord Adrian Wood

For this battle report we decided to use Adrian's Ork army, Waaagh! Grishnak Grimjaw. You may remember Adrian's original Ork army which we featured in WD 201, Waaagh! Grishnak Ironhide. When Gorkamorka came out Adrian was so excited by the new Ork models that he decided to make a completely new Ork army using Gorkamorka Orks and all the crazy vehicle conversions he loves to create. This army, led by his new Warboss, Grishnak Grimjaw, is already pretty enormous and every model has its base painted for fighting on a desert battlefield, like the Praetorians. Adrian's feral Orks look just right for this scenario in which skill at hand-to-hand combat is paramount. It's not everyone who can boast two huge Ork armies to fight with, one on desert terrain and one on jungle terrain!

Adrian: Waaagh! Grishnak is made up of mobs that are twenty-strong so I'll have to split them down into ten-strong mobs for this scenario. I've got no worries about what I randomly roll up in the way of an army, I'll have models to accommodate! The only real decision I have to make is how many assaults to fight. I'll opt for four assaults as this should give me enough time to smash the enemy and enough reinforcements in the last assault to swing the game in my favour. This is the first time I've played Paul at Warhammer 40,000 and I'm looking forward to crossing axes with him!





WARLORD

NOBZ

BOYZ

DREADNOUGHT WITH TWO HEAVY BOLTERS

DREADNOUGHT WITH MISSILE LAUNCHER AND HEAVY BOLTER

SCORCHER

SCORCHER

TRUKK

SQUIG KATAPULT

ASSAULT 1

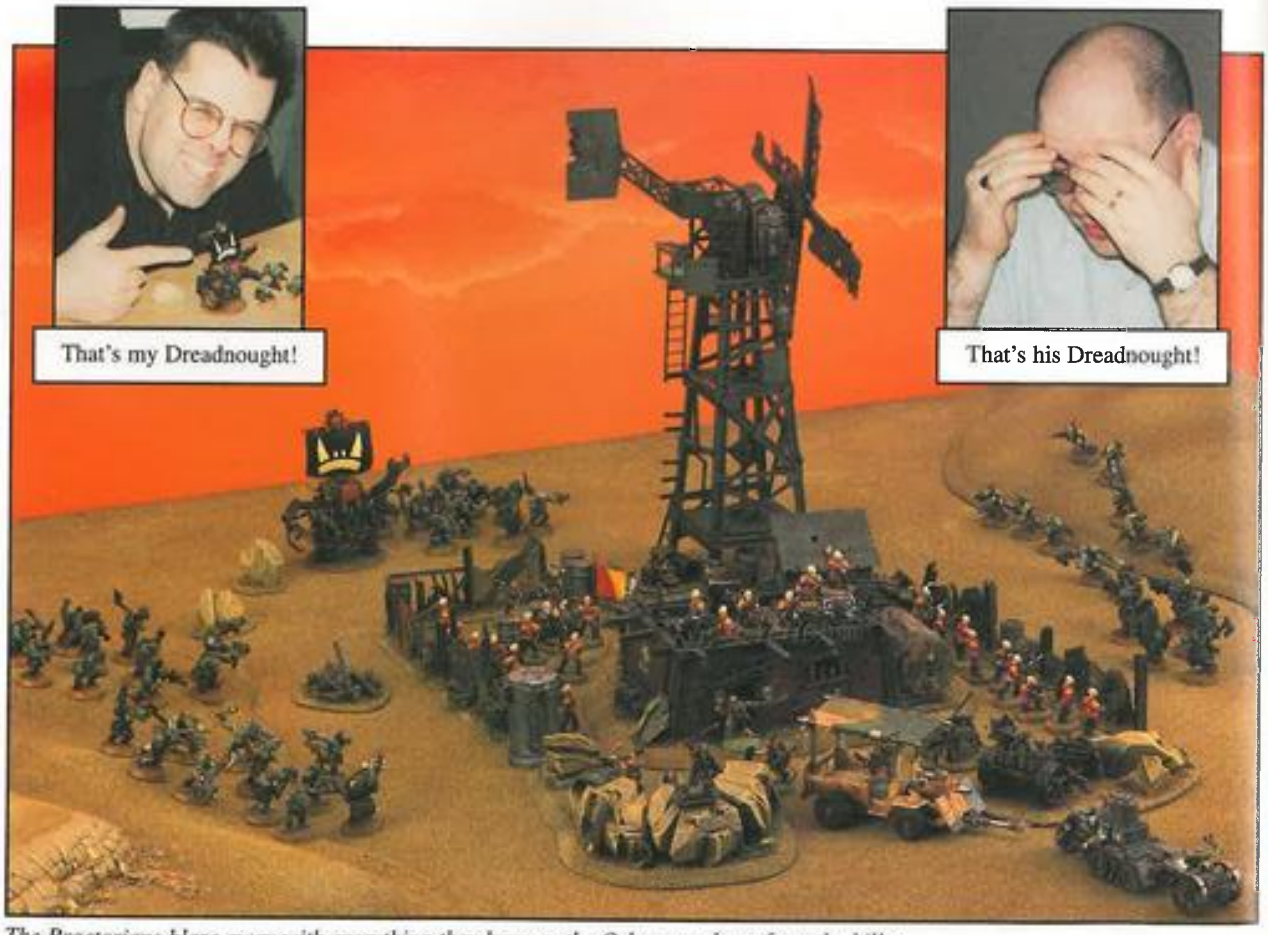
Paul: This really is going to be interesting as I have no idea what I'll be shooting at. I won't know what Adrian's force consists of until it appears over the crest of the hills that ring Glazer's Farm. With this in mind, and knowing that most Ork armies rely on weight of numbers, I deploy both the lascannon teams and the heavy bolter team on the roof of what will undoubtably become the hospital. This is for two reasons: firstly it will afford them the best vantage point for targeting purposes and secondly it will be harder for the Orks to get up close and personal as they'll have to fight their way through the other Guardsmen first. One of the Administratum Menials mans the heavy bolter in the Truck. Apart from this, each squad sets up in the defences with the best fire arcs they can find.

Finally, Hooky the Ratling Sniper takes up a superb sniper's perch high on the Windmill, so that he can effectively pick off anyone he wants and if I'm really lucky Adrian may just forget he's there and thus forget to kill him (ensuring victory for the stout defenders of Glazer's Farm!).

Other than that I've only two priorities in this battle – shoot as many greenskins as possible and then fall back to a safer and more defensible position where the Orks can't make use of their enhanced WS.

Adrian: I rolled for my Leaders and the first result is Shooty Stuff, so without hesitation I take one of my specially converted Dreadnoughts. These huge, mechanical beasts, lumbering across the battlefield, clobbering the enemy with their power claws, chanting WAAAGH! and blasting everything in sight, are the weapon of choice for any Warboss, any time! Even if this one gets totalled by one of the lascannons, I've still got another waiting in the wings. Next I roll up two Nobz to lead my Boyz. Each has a power claw, the only weapon for an elite mob leader. Next I start rolling up troops for my Nobz to lead. After a couple of Boyz mobs (I'll take Boyz mobs over Gretchin until I run out of models) I roll a 6 and get a either a Nobz mob or Boarboyz. As my Boarboyz are at the moment sat in a box waiting to be painted, I have no choice but to opt for a Nobz mob. Not that this is a bad option; five Nobz with power axes are always great to have along in a punch up! After rolling up two more Boyz mobs I get a buggy. I decide that the best tool for this job will be a Scorcher, with its heavy flamer that ignores cover and doesn't roll to hit! Paul's face was a picture. All I have to do now is roll to see which table edges my Boyz come on from.

After rolling for all my squads there is only one thing I can say: that's Orks for ya. They couldn't coordinate an attack if they tried! The way the dice rolls have worked out, the Praetorians are pretty much surrounded, but given a choice I always prefer to attack in strength at one point. Still, I can't complain, even though the Scorcher is quite vulnerable on its own. However, hope is at hand. The -1 to hit that the Praetorians will suffer for shooting on Overwatch at targets emerging from cover should see it through, at least for one turn of firing. That should be enough to fry a squad of puny 'oomies. Apart from that, I can see this turn becoming a foot race, with the first Ork to make the barricades the winner!



The Praetorians blaze away with everything they have as the Orks pour down from the hills.

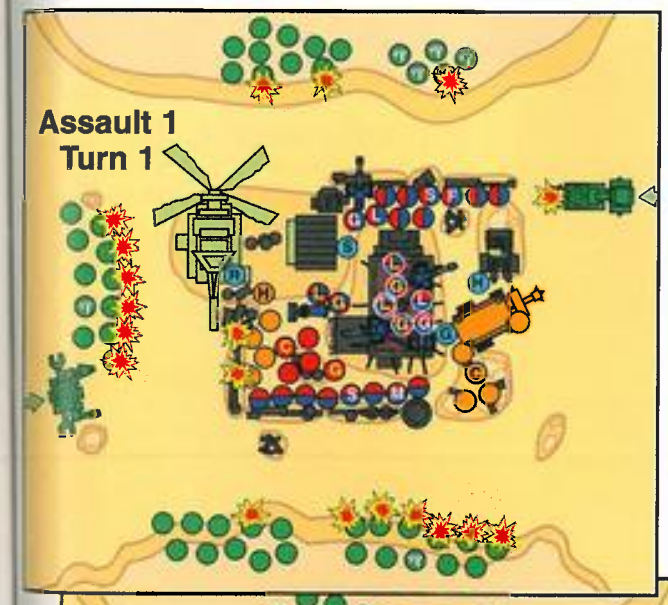
THE ASSAULT

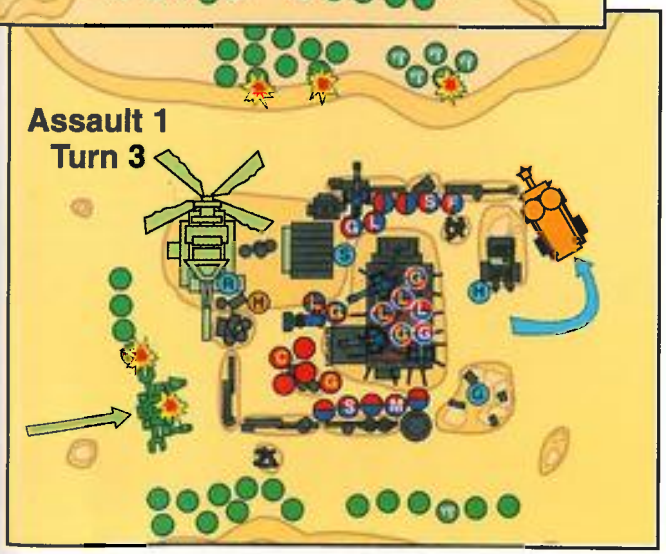
From the hills all around, dozens of Ork warriors swarm down towards the tiny farm, shouting war-cries and firing their bolters into the air.

In the farm Captain Caine has prepared the Imperial defence carefully, with men all along the perimeter fence and heavy weapon teams on the roof of the single farm building. "Steady, men!" his voice rings out clearly, "Don't shoot till you see the reds of their eyes!"

"Don't shoot till you see the reds of their eyes!"

The Imperial Guard overwatch opens up as the greenskins come into range, cutting down seven of them. However dozens still remain. Lascannon and heavy bolter fire flash past the Ork Scorcher, unable to hit the ramshackle vehicle. Suddenly from behind the farm building the mortar crew lob a shell right over the top of the roof. It hits the Scorcher bang on, penetrates its armour and blows it up! Returning fire, the Ork Dreadnought guns down two of the civilians who have bravely taken up arms to join the defence of the farm.





The Orks charge forward into another fusillade of lasgun shots. With the help of the Ratling Sniper picking off greenskins from his perch at the top of the windmill, ten more Orks are slain. Meanwhile the lumbering Ork Dreadnought keeps coming as lascannon shots bounce off its thick armour plates.

If only we were playing Subbuteo!

Burn, Baby Burn! Adrian threatens Paul with a Scorcher template!

However, the Ork advance begins to slow down, demoralised by the casualties they are taking. The mobs of Boyz blast the farm with bolter fire and ten of the defenders fall, mostly Praetorian Guardsmen. But suddenly a single lascannon shot destroys the Dreadnought in a spectacular explosion (that kills an Ork who is standing too close). At the sight of this, the Orks cut their losses and retreat back into the hills to regroup ready for the next attack.

Paul: Well, that went as well as could be expected! I certainly wasn't expecting a Scorcher AND a Dreadnought. As I was tightly packed and making the most of the cover available I had to make the Scorcher my number one target (it doesn't have to roll to hit when firing and so it ignores cover) and although most of my heavy weapons shots deflected off its armour the Mortar crew saved the day, enabling me to concentrate on the Boyz and the hulking Dreadnought.

I wasn't surprised when the Orks faltered in the face of such a torrent of fire. I was surprised however, that they then went on to blast away at the defenders with all they had (very un-Orky!). This suited me though as it meant they wouldn't be able to get into close combat and this is their main strength (particularly the Orks on this world!).

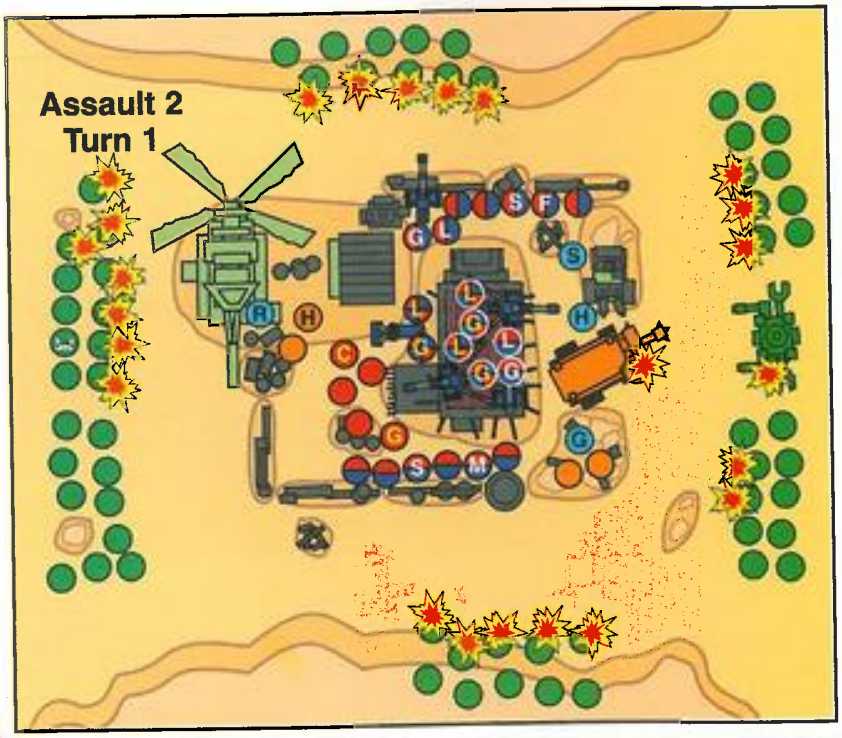
Adrian: Ouch! That was a bit like driving full tilt into a brick wall! All that firing on the first turn really took its toll, although the Dreadnought did some damage before being destroyed. Paul expressed surprise that I shot the Praetorians with my Boyz rather than charging in. Even though my Boyz have increased WS and decreased BS, I think I made the right choice. Hand-to-hand combat is always risky; it's the only time when you can suffer casualties in your own turn, as well as inflicting them on the enemy. Considering how close the Boyz were to getting below thirty models, shooting for a turn was far less risky and indeed probably caused far more damage. All-in-all, a reasonable assault, and next time there will be less Guardsman so the going will be easier.

ASSAULT 2

Adrian: Aha! I roll up another yet Ork Dreadnought! And Warlord Grishnak Grimjaw has made it onto the field, along with another Nob! I don't get anything else for my troops other than sixty Boyz! Unfortunately they decide to attack the farm from all four sides again. I'd better get used to this, it will probably happen on every assault. OK Boyz, let's get 'em!

Paul: Hmmm, another Dreadnought, eh? I already have a bad feeling about this battle report. Adrian seems to be able to get just what he needs from the Ork army table! At least I won't have to worry about a Scorcher speeding across the table and gouting flame across my battle lines. There ends the good news however, as not only will Ork Warlord Grishnak be coming out to play, but he'll be accompanied by sixty Boyz! This means that I'll have to kill at least thirty of the little green blighters to stop the advance, hopefully before they get into close combat. It really is a tall order…

If things get desperate, I'll pull everyone back to the hospital building so that when the Orks come within 4", my wounded can crawl from their beds and defend the farm with bedpans and surgical scalpels!



THE ASSAULT

The farm building has been commandeered as a make-shift hospital, and a number of the wounded have already been patched up and ordered back to their posts. After a tense hour of waiting the Orks attack again, and every man braces himself, ready to defend his position with his life if necessary.

Overwatch fire is less effective than in the first assault and only four Orks are killed, while the Dreadnought (this one approaching from the other side of the farm) is damaged in the legs and reduced to a limp. But this does not stop it firing at the farm's truck and killing the Menial manning its heavy bolter. Seeing this, Parchett the Scribe bravely rushes forward to take the gunner's place.

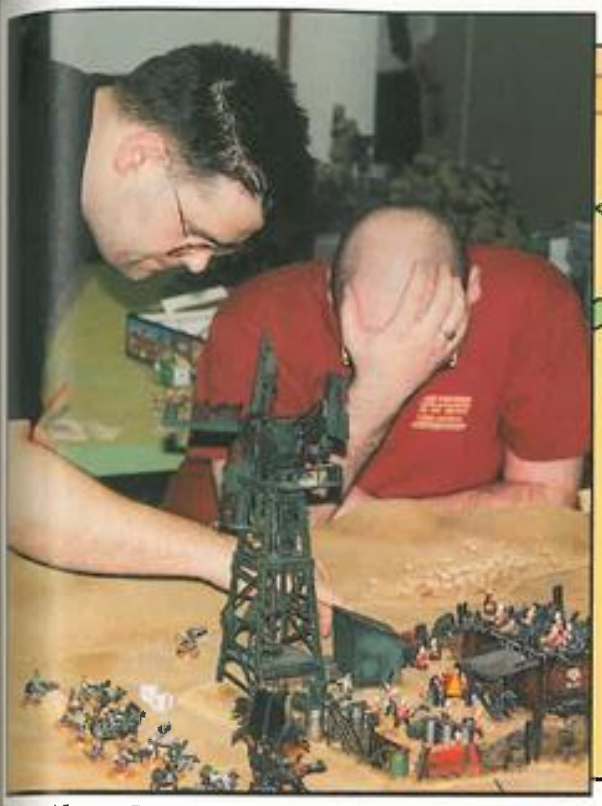
The Guardsmen and their allies open fire again, this time with devastating effect. On every side greenskins fall to the massed lasgun and heavy weapons fire. In all, nineteen Orks are killed, seriously weakening the charge and as before, the remainder slow to let loose with their bolters. Eight of the defenders fall, mostly civilians. The most serious loss is the grizzled veteran scout Blikk, and Parchett slumps forward over the heavy bolter that he hadn't quite worked out how to fire.

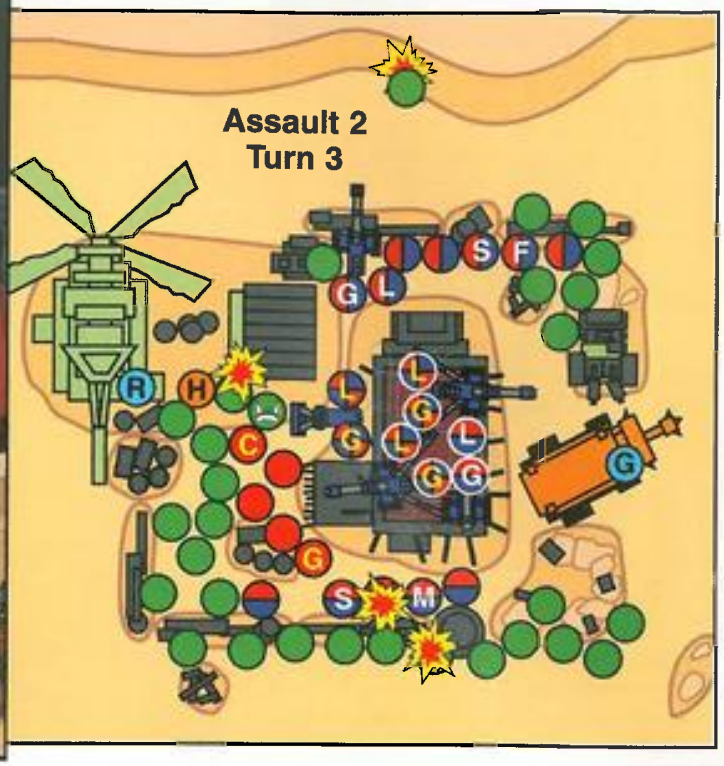
Hmmm, another Dreadnought, eh?

As the Orks close in, seven more of them are shot down, while the Dreadnought is wrecked by the lascannons. Farmer Glazer himself steps forward to man the gun in the bullet-riddled farm truck. Then the Orks charge, breaking through the perimeter fence in a number of places. Ork Warlord Grishnak charges straight at Captain Caine, who sets a brave example for the men under his command and stands his ground, while Squad Jenkins stalwartly keeps the Orks at bay. The greenskins have been reduced to less than half their numbers and the tide of the attack turns in the favour of the defenders. The Orks break and run, leaving the defenders to count the cost.

Paul: That was tense. After a very good round of shooting I thought I had it in the bag, only to be confounded by the low cunning of the Ork Warlord and his decision to once again halt the attack and bring his guns to bear. I lost more defenders than I'd care to mention but looking at the number of Orks I was facing I think I did rather well, old bean.

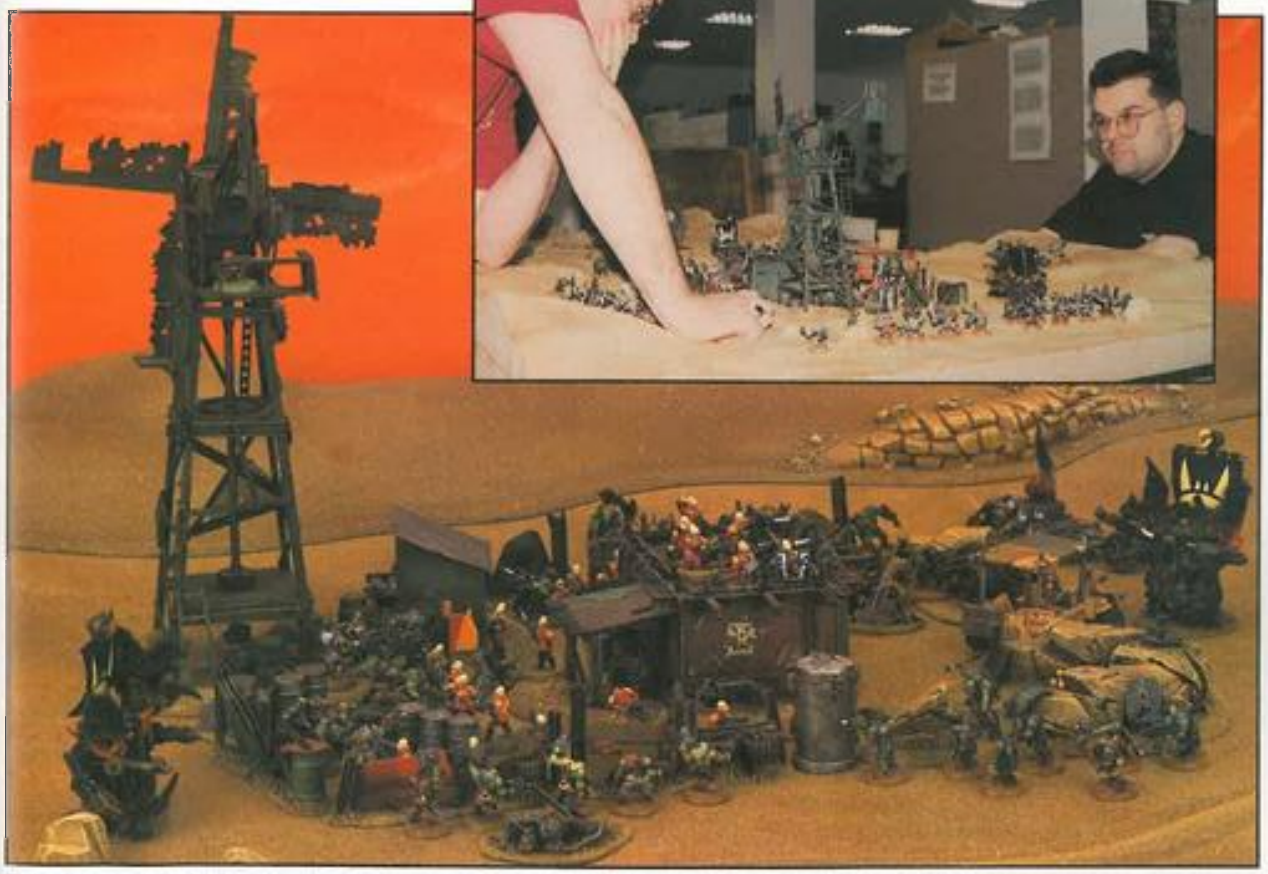
Adrian: Well, at least we made it into close combat, although as expected I suffered enough casualties of my own to force the Orks back. Next turn will be really important, I must hit hard and fast!





Above: *Come on Paul, it can't be all that bad. Can it?*

Right: *Paul ponders his next move while Adrian attempts to outstare the Windmill.*



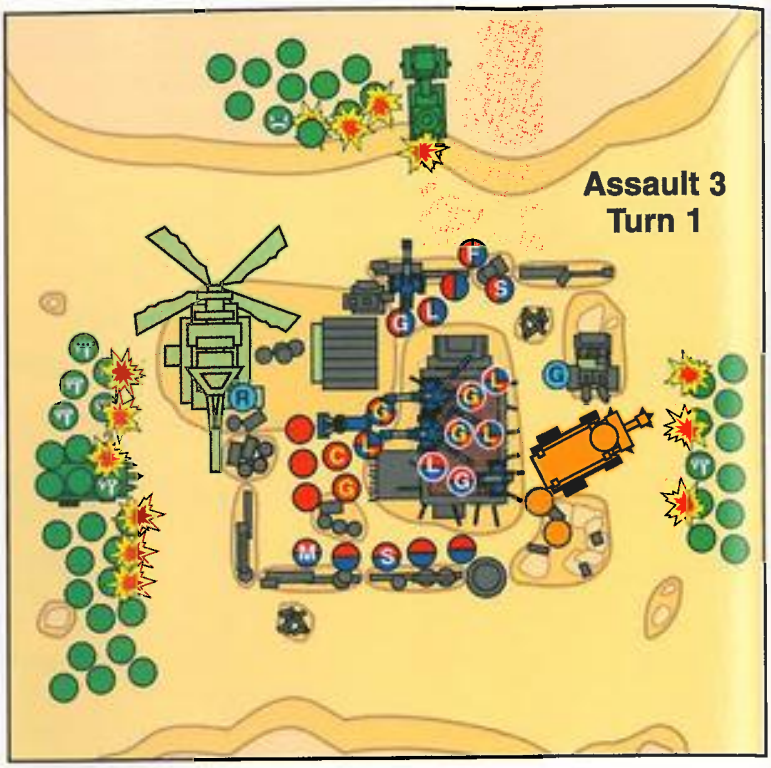
From his perch high above the battlefield, Hooky watches as the Orks break through the perimeter defences.

ASSAULT 3

Paul: With my numbers reduced even more this time, the effect will be twofold: firstly I'll have less guns to reduce the Ork numbers to breaking point and secondly this will mean that they'll almost certainly over-run the farm defences. To counter this I pull the defences into a tighter ring so that the Orks have further to run to get into close combat.

As Adrian rolls for the Ork army my heart sinks – another Scorcher! To make matters worse he rolls up a War Trukk so he'll be speeding his Boyz even faster into the fray. Oh dear.

Adrian: This time Grishnak must have had divine inspiration from Gork and Mork themselves. Not only are the Orks set up in strength, but I've got Grishnak himself, four Boyz mobs with a couple of Nobz to lead them, a Nobz mob into the bargain and a Trukk too. Nice going Grish!



THE ASSAULT

The weary defenders prepare to repulse another wave of greenskins. The makeshift hospital is now full to bursting with the injured and dying, including most of the civilians, while Squads Jones and Jenkins are both down to near half strength.

Another huge horde of Orks charges down from the hills. Roughly a dozen fall to enemy fire as they close in, and more importantly, the Scorcher is destroyed by an autocannon shell before it can get close enough to bring its deadly heavy flamer to bear. Private Simpson, seeing the Ork threat looming in front of him, scales the fence and advances into firing range. His sergeant leaps forward to stop the foolhardy young guardsman, shouting "Hold your position, laddie!" But it's too late – the foolhardy young Guardsman rushes forward and fire spews from the nozzle of his flamer. The results are less than impressive and the Ork charge quickly reaches the outer fence. Private Simpson is smashed to the ground by Grishnak Grimjaw himself. The farm truck is swamped by the greenskins, its crew butchered. On the other side of the farm a trukkful of Ork Boyz leap from their vehicle and blast away at short range. Command Squad Davies is mown down, leaving Captain Caine standing alone, grimly waiting to fight the enemy at close quarters.

Command Squad Davies is mown down, leaving Captain Caine standing alone, grimly waiting to fight the enemy at close quarters.

Private Simpson breaks ranks to burn the Orks! Impetuous boy!

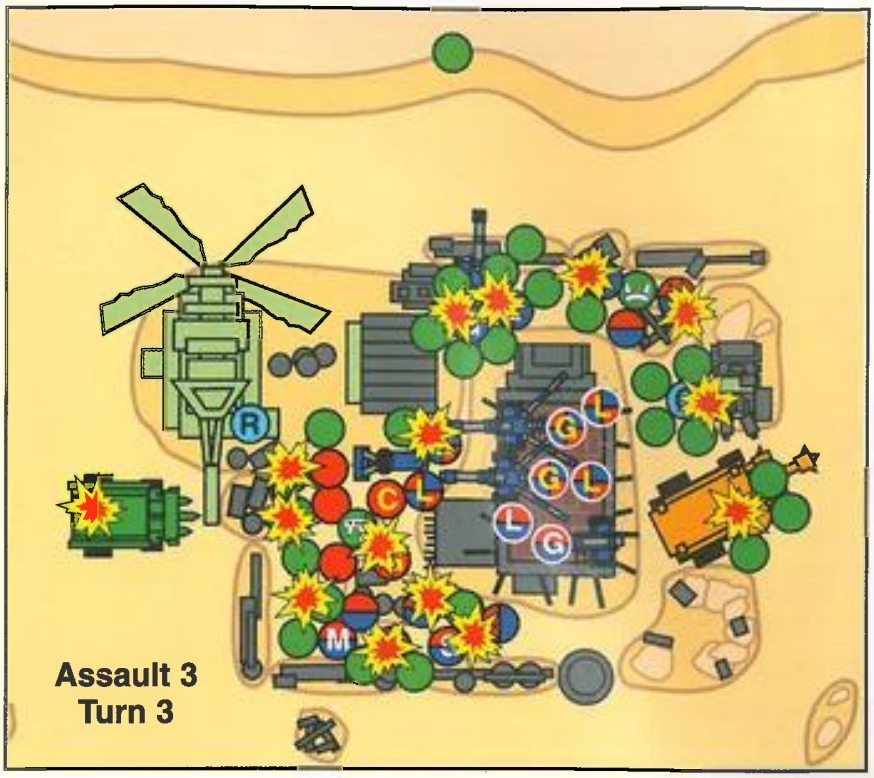
On every side Orks break into the farm compound. Squads Jones and Jenkins are both completely overrun. Farmer Glazer kills one Ork before he succumbs to sheer weight of numbers. At that moment a handful of the wounded emerge from the hospital to join in the battle, barely able to walk, let alone fight! This desperate act of bravery gives the defenders new-found determination, and the Guardsmen on the roof of the hospital shoot into the massed greenskins below them. Captain Caine fights on in the midst of the Orks, still shouting encouragement to his men, as he cuts down an Ork Nob with his chainsword. Orks are clambering onto the roof of the hospital when their trukk crashes and explodes. The Orks lose heart and run back to the cover of the surrounding hills,

and leave the defenders to set about the grim task of patching up the survivors and burying their dead comrades.

Paul: I'm in deep trouble now. There are potentially two more assaults to come (Adrian gets to choose how many he'll attempt in secret at the start of the game) and I'm sorely lacking in numbers.

With only my heavy weapons teams, a handful of Praetorian troopers and the odd civilian left to face the next assault, things are looking very grim indeed!

Adrian: Paul has very little left in the way of fighting men, but the last thing I need to be is over confident. With only one assault left and regardless of the reinforcements on the way, I can't afford to loose sight of the objective; to kill the Praetorian scum without losing too many Boyz in the process. I must be real cunnin' like…



The Praetorian's draw their defensive ring ever tighter.

ASSAULT 4

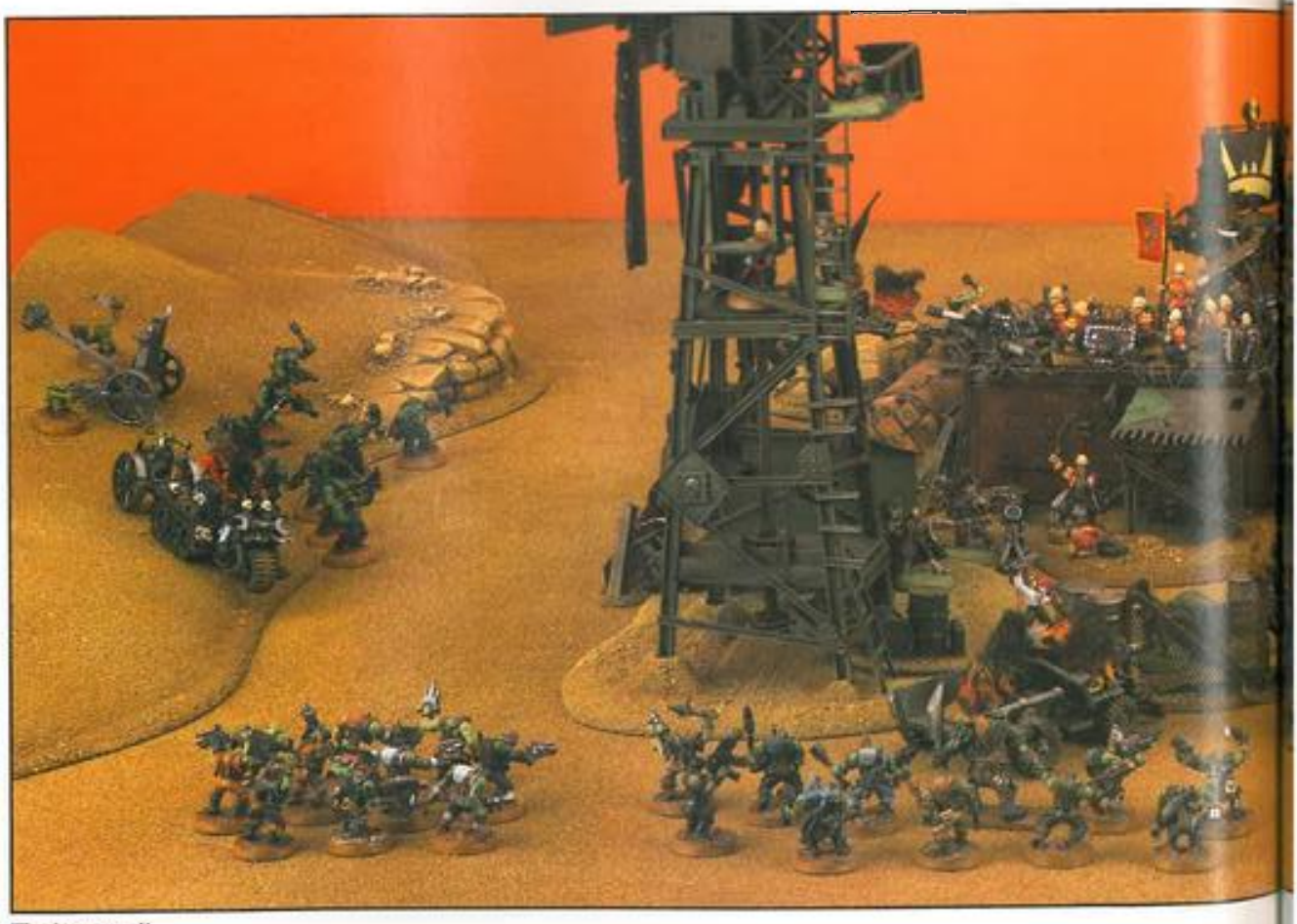
Paul: This is it then – the final assault. If I had been Adrian I'd have kept that quiet until turn 3 and watched my opponents face with smug satisfaction. Then again Adrian isn't as sadistic as me…

The predictable happens again and Adrian rolls yet another Scorcher! To add insult to injury he also gets a Squig Catapult, 40 Boyz and a Nobz mob. Considering what I'm defending with, it looks as if it's all over, but with true Praetorian spirit I will fight on to the last!

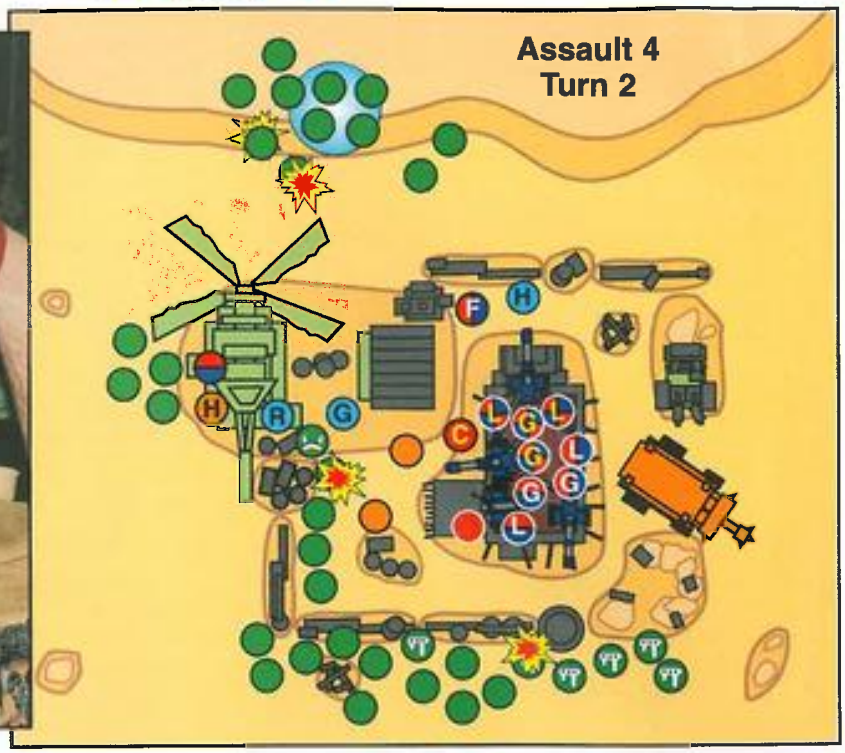
My deployment is easy this time – place a Guardsman and the Menial Champion on the windmill tower so that unless they manage to shoot them in hard cover, the Orks will have to fight them with Queensbery rules (one at a time, like gentlemen). Blikk and the wounded Private Simpson (with his trusty flamer) will defend against the Squig Catapult and the mob screening it. Blikk still has a Stasis Grenade which I've been saving for as long as I can and this seems the right time to use it. Everyone else will blaze away from the hospital rooftop.

Best get on with it then…

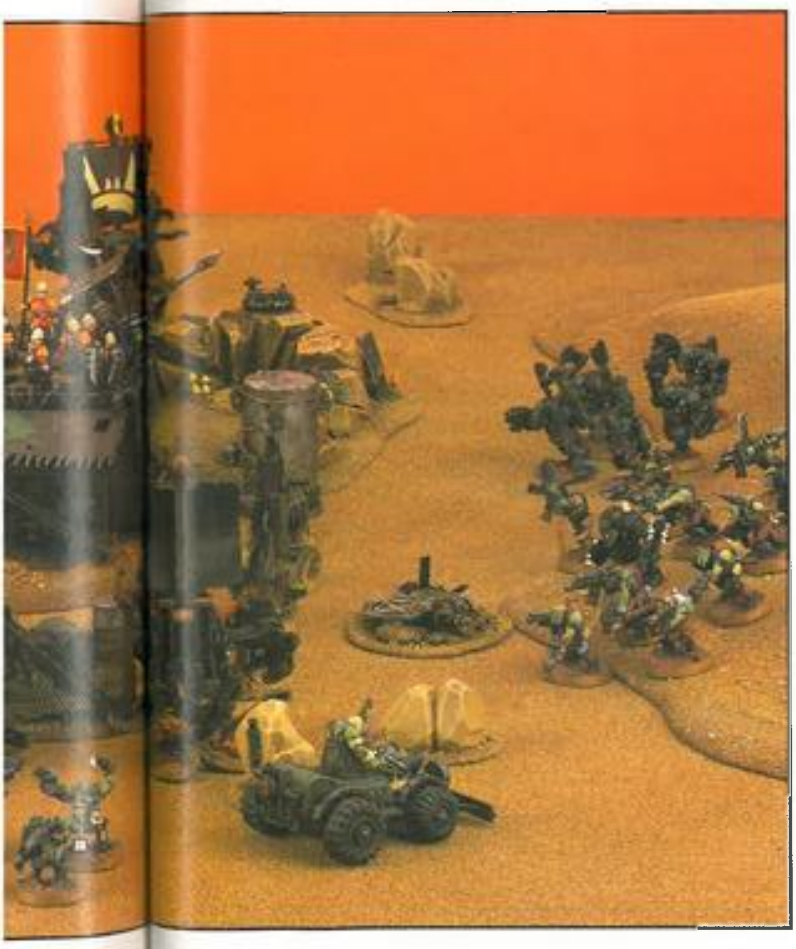
Adrian: I've got Grishnak once again, a Squig Katapult in place of a Dreadnought, another Scorcher and a Nobz mob, but only 40 Boyz this turn. I must really rely on the coming reinforcements to bolster my forces in turn 3. Still, with Warlord Grishnak leading the force I feel confident.



The last stand!



In a last ditch attempt to pull victory from the jaws of defeat, Paul tries to blind Adrian with the glare from his forehead!

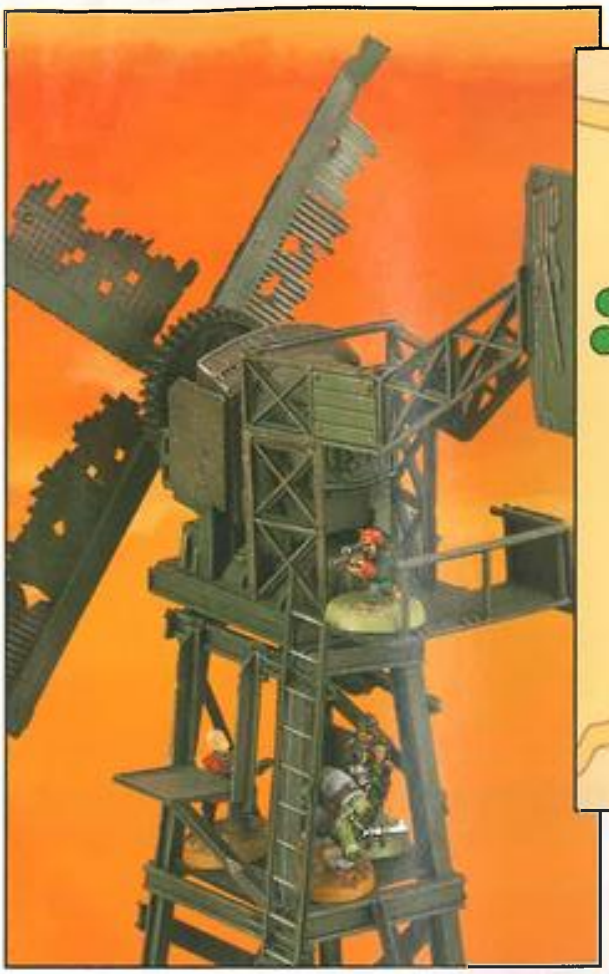


THE ASSAULT

Things look desperate for the beleaguered inhabitants of Glazer's Farm. Only seventeen men remain fit to fight, they are low on ammunition, and the Ork attacks show no sign of abating. All around the farm are the smoking wrecks of vehicles destroyed in the previous assaults. The only bit of heartening news is the recovery of Blikk, the hardy old scout, who emerges from the hospital saying he isn't finished with the Orks and still has a little surprise for them. Also determined to fight on is Farmer Glazer, insisting that he will join the defence of his home, despite his injuries. Private Simpson too is back on his feet, under strict orders not to stray out of the farm compound again. His sergeant unfortunately wasn't so lucky…

The sound of another Ork attack fills the valley. Captain Caine calls out a last order, "Ready Praetorians. Make every shot count!"

The sound of another Ork attack fills the valley. Captain Caine calls out a last order, "Ready Praetorians. Make every shot count!" The Imperial weapons grow hot as the guardsmen try desperately to whittle down the huge number of Orks. The Scorcher is blown to bits and the primitive Ork catapult is also destroyed while the crew are still pushing it into position above the farm. Blikk hefts an arcane device and, flicking the safety catch off, presses a large, red button. "I've been saving this for a special occasion!" he shouts and hurls it into the mob

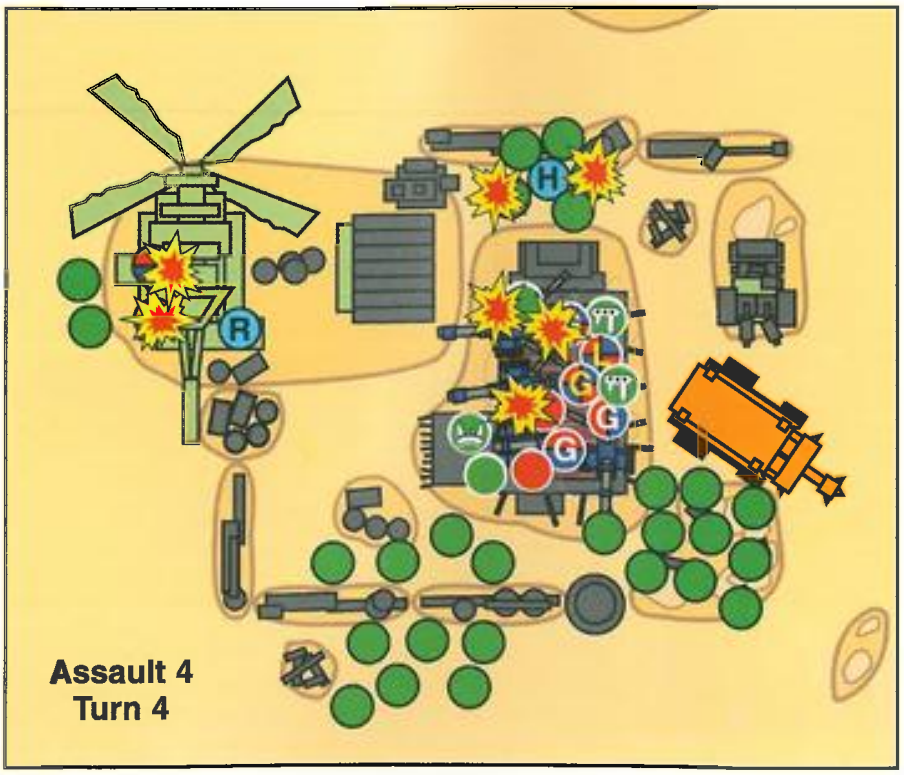


As each Ork scales the tower, the Menial Champion knocks them to the ground!

of Orks bearing down on him and Private Simpson. There is a flash and a swirling vortex engulfs the Orks. Those in the centre are frozen in place while those nearer the edge move in slow motion. Blikk has at least bought them some time.

On the other side of the farm the savage Orks have reached the fence and this time there are no Guardsmen to stop them clambering over. Beneath the windmill a small group of Boyz led by the Ork Warlord, Grishnak, break through into the compound. As if things aren't bad enough, yet more Orks appear out of the hills and swarm down, eager to join in the attack and finish off these weak but stubborn 'oomies.

Greenskins rampage through the farm, as the defenders fire at them from the hospital roof. They start climbing up the windmill towards the Ratling who is still reliably plugging an Ork with every shot. Captain Caine had wisely anticipated this and positioned a couple of men on the level below. From their elevated position, these two send each Ork that reaches them tumbling to his death. At the foot of the windmill, Farmer Glazer is savagely cut down by the Ork Warlord and dies defending the home he built all those years ago.



Blikk and Private Simpson are finally attacked at close quarters. The veteran scout fights with years of experience and swiftly dispatches his attackers, but Simpson is not so fortunate and falls beneath the Orks' axes. At the same time, Orks are scrambling up onto the hospital roof to attack the heavy weapon teams, and more are arriving all the time. Each loader defends his gunner so they can carry on firing for as long as possible. Their desperate defence costs three more lives, and even with the aid of the walking wounded, they can not fight the greenskins off. On the ground Captain Caine is backed into a corner, battling against three Orks at once, including the ferocious Warlord, twice the size of Caine. The Captain fights for his life. Valiantly he slays the first two Orks, but the Warlord waits for his moment and rains down blows with a brutal power sword. Captain Caine's last words are shouted to his men, "Praetorians! We fight to the last man!"

With the death of their commanding officer, things look bleak for the defenders. And yet the Orks' numbers are thinning – if they can just hold out a bit longer…

The Ork Boyz give up climbing the windmill, choosing to shoot instead. This is much more devastating, killing the two defenders to leave the sniper unguarded. All the soldiers on the hospital roof are now battling with greenskins, and still they proudly wave their regimental banner. Meanwhile Blikk is the last man left standing on the ground. Surrounded by five Orks, he fights with the assurance of a man who has faced these odds before and survived with plenty of scars to prove it. Felling two of his attackers, he swiftly gains the upper hand, and it is this combat that turns the tide. The ragged handful of Imperial defenders have reduced the Orks to a fraction of their original numbers, and Blikk is still cutting down more, laughing maniacally with every blow. The Warlord has reached the roof now and surveys the state of the carnage. He gives the red-uniformed body lying at his feet one last kick and grudgingly decides he can't afford to lose any more Boyz. It's an insignificant farm anyway…

As the Orks run, the defenders give thanks to the Emperor for their lives. Four Guardsmen remain fit, along with Hooky and Blikk, and ten others also recover from their injuries.

Private Llewelyn relays the final list of casualties to Sergeant Shard, who, as the highest ranking guardsman still standing, has assumed command of the survivors. The new NCO pulls himself up tall and yells, "Private, your uniform is a disgrace! Get yourself straightened up at once, you 'orrible little man!" It is all over, bar the screeching of the carrion crows circling expectantly overhead.

Captain Caine's last words were shouted to his men, "Praetorians! We fight to the last man!"

STRETCHER BEARERS!

Paul: Phew! That was too close for comfort. I was convinced that the Orks had it in the bag at the start of the final assault and that I was simply fighting out the last moments of a brave defence. It just goes to show that you should keep on going until you've lost and never throw the towel in.

This is by far the best battle I have ever had the fortune to play in and am looking forward to playing it again soon, this time trying the Orks out.

This was actually the third time we'd fought the 'Last Stand at Glazer's Creek'. The first time the table was 8' x 4' and Orks entering from the 4' edges had too much ground cover to get in close. There was also the problem of the Orks standing and shooting. This just didn't fit with the 'Zulu!' theme, so Jerv introduced the feral Ork ruling which meant it was in the Orks best interests to get in close and attack rather than shoot. The Orks were winning hands down by the second assault so we decided to start again.

In the second game we were playing on a 4'x 4' table and Jervis suggested the Praetorians (not the civilians though) should have the Dead Eye Shot veteran ability (allowing them to re-roll missed shots). This swung the balance too far the other way and by the end of the first Overwatch phase the Orks were vanquished and the Guardsmen hadn't taken a scratch. The scenario you see here is the result of these games. It just goes to show the benefit of thoroughly playtesting your ideas!

I'LL KILL YA NEXT TIME!

Adrian: This has to be the biggest, most gruelling game I've ever played. After all those assaults I'm completely drained. Well done Paul, that was a great fight.

Everything seemed pretty well sewn up by the last turn, so what turned the game in Paul's favour? Funnily enough, I forgot to do what I did in the first assault; I should have shot Blikk rather than trying to take him down in hand-to-hand combat. I was so close combat-minded by the last turn that the idea of shooting didn't enter my mind, I just wanted to fight! In this last assault it didn't help that I rolled up so few Ork Boyz mobs. Although I had more Boyz turn up as reinforcements, things were slipping away much faster than I realised and before I knew it, victory had eluded me.

This scenario is great and can be refought again and again. In order to make the game a little different Jervis came up with the feral Ork rule, where the Orks had increased WS and decreased BS. This is a nice idea, but you could try refighting the battle with the Orks having the psychology of Hatred or Frenzy. Reintroducing Break tests would put a different slant on the battle, particularly if you fought each assault to the death rather than until thirty Orks were dead. As these are meant to be feral Orks, you could make the force really barbaric by taking Boarboyz instead of the vehicles and Dreadnoughts. These are just my thoughts, why not have a go using your own ideas?